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VOLUME THREE

Letters from Jail

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Fragments Of A Prisoner's Diary
VOLUME THREE

Letters from Jail

By
M. N. ROY

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INTRODUCTION

To introduce Mr. M. N. Roy or his book to the Indian public may appear unnecessary. Yet, I have ventured to comply with the request of the publishers, because I consider it a privilege to be of some use in making the Indian people understand and appreciate one of the greatest Indians of our time. Notwithstanding the accident of his birth in the province of Bengal in India, this book reveals him as a true citizen of the world, in a wider sense than he was even hitherto known in his country as an international figure.

This book, as its title indicates, is a collection of letters Mr. Roy wrote from jail during his imprisonment, which extended over more than half a decade—letters sent off “in the void, never knowing whether they will reach their destination”. This book of letters can be placed in a category by itself, clearly distinguishable from the other writings of M. N. Roy, in their being at once political and personal, intimate and intensely human. They reveal a highly developed modern mind, rich, sensitive, and reacting energetically to men, events and things around, as they are, and as they are becoming, and with a profound confidence to remake them all: “This is a cruel world. It makes unnecessary troubles for harmless people like ourselves. But we shall remake it.” (Page 3) Occasionally bored, but often amused, by the stupidities and absurdities of the surroundings in which he was suddenly

placed in his own country, after an absence of fifteen years, he subjects them to a penetrating analysis, always with an eye on the future, on how things can be improved.

One of the things on which it is difficult to elicit information from Mr. Roy is himself and his own life. It would not be quite incorrect to say that even his close associates in public life know little of him; and because of this peculiar silence, the curious and the critical have dubbed him the "Mystery Man" of Indian politics. To me, this silence does not at all appear deliberate. It is quite natural of a personality merged in the current of history, constantly struggling to influence its course. This exceptional identity of the man with his work naturally precludes the possibility of any expression about himself except in terms of his work. It is not without significance that this should not have struck those whose all work is an unending talk of themselves.

Written under conditions of an enforced separation from his activities, these letters reflect the personality in a vivid and poignant manner. While reading them on every page we get a glimpse of his versatile mind, with its extensive range of interests from music to mathematics, of his broad sympathies and his fine sense of humour. Here is a man who laughs at the world, and is capable of laughing at himself too. Glimpses into his personality, as are provided by these letters, are rare indeed, and therefore all the more welcome. I am sure they will prove to be of inestimable value to the general readers by giving them an opportunity of viewing, so to say from close quarters, one of the greatest figures in contemporary history.

M. N. Roy the politician is well known. Notwithstanding all the prejudices of uncritical and short-sighted opponents, the correctness of his conclusions, arrived at with

the help of a penetrating insight and profound knowledge of the science of history and society, has been proved beyond all doubt. Things that he visualised, under the scorn of his adversaries, have become actuality. His analysis of the trends of events and his predictions regarding the possible outcome of those trends, have been sufficiently substantiated; and that fact alone ought to lead even greater significance to what he has to say to-day. This has been so, for the simple reason that, behind M. N. Roy the politician stands M. N. Roy, the philosopher, the scientist. These letters give us an opportunity to experience that fact in a most lively manner, making it more impressive than ever before.

It is only natural that this mind, brought up and cultivated in the best traditions of modern civilisation, and having drunk deep of its content, should at times find the conditions in this country quite disgusting. It is true that he sometimes loses patience with them. Often he feels the need of cleaning them up all, neat and wholesale. The picture he draws of his "harmless" (?) jail companion (on page 65) is a typical case in point. It ends with the note: "This country needs a Kemal Pasha to begin with, to chop off the ridiculous tufts on the heads, to make the wearing of fierce moustaches punishable as culpable homicide, to drive the pampered, idle, gossiping, but outrageously maltreated, women in the streets to work down their fat, or to cure their anaemia, and to free themselves from the malignant curse of suppressed passion, to prohibit the ignorant chanting of rigmarole in a language which few understand, and to do many other similar things—" symptoms of a decayed civilisation, "awaiting a much delayed burial."

But there is the hope and the will to change it all. That hope and that will, which go like a counter point

through all these letters, inspire all his activities, and they alone must have carried him through those endless years of what he calls "living death." Yet, even in such conditions, Mr. Roy has accomplished a truly immense work. The range of his intellectual activities, even in jail, even with restricted writing facilities, with a cruelly rationed paper supply and niggardly doled out books, which had to come to him from over thousands of miles, is stupendous. Friends of his have seen in his house nearly a dozen volumes with thousands of pages, covered, every inch of them, in handwriting of sometimes almost illegibly tiny characters. And one is tempted to wish Mr. Roy had the time and leisure to sit down for some time and make this product of nearly six years intensive scientific and research work available to the reading world.

He himself appears to have sometimes an almost overwhelming desire to do so and devote himself exclusively to intellectual work. There are many references in these letters to this desire. But politics appears more pressing : "...this country must catch up with the world." (P. 4) He has no illusions. He believes that the process will demand almost super-human efforts and the undivided energies and activities of all those interested in bringing about the result. In veiled language, those problems are also dealt with in these letters from jail. What is perhaps the crucial problem is stated by Mr. Roy when he writes : "Great men, when they are not really great, (and when they are so, they seldom get the recognition), are uncertain quantities. But uncertain quantities and variables cannot be kept out of the mathematics of life, though this is not pure, but applied mathematics." Reference in this and the following quotation appears to be to a meeting of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with some of Mr. Roy's friends in

Europe, a meeting which seems to have left the latter rather puzzled and disappointed. He refers to that experience as having "afforded to you and other friends an insight into the problem I have to tackle. It cannot be simply set aside. There are those who have preferred the line of least resistance, which has brought them nowhere. . . . I am simply acting on the old dictum: Be realist." In this context, Mr. Roy recollects his friend, the veteran German Communist leader Heinrich Brandler trying to persuade him not to return to India with the argument that "with all its apparent sweepingness, the mass movement in India is very immature and nothing can be achieved before a solid foundation is laid through quiet preparatory work."

Well, what was meant to be an argument to keep him back persuaded Mr. Roy to return to India. He admits that the forces making for progress in India are very immature, but he believes that the "solid foundation" has to be laid on the spot. And he returns, at the price of six years of his life in jail and it was worse then than it is to-day—to do the job. Nothing could be more reassuring than to find Mr. Roy expressing in these letters confidence in the success of the task he has put to himself. And reviewing the work he has done in a similar stretch of time since he came out of jail, one may expect that his confidence has grown and that success is nearer.

The rich, eventful and even adventurous career of Mr. Roy naturally baffles the imagination. I do not know whether the often innocent, if occasionally interested, curiosity to know it in full will ever be satisfied. Till then, these letters are and will be our only source of knowledge of this forceful and colourful personality; and they are, in my opinion, one of the best autobiographical pieces of

literature—with a difference. I strongly recommend them to all serious students of contemporary history, who can also appreciate a very human and original work of literature.

Abraham S. Erulkar.

Little Gibbs Road,
Malabar Hill, Bombay.

LETTERS FROM JAIL

District Jail, Cawnpore,

April 11, 1931.

YOU will not be surprised to get this letter. For, you must have known the news already from press reports. It has happened as expected, by me, at any rate. So, here am I lodged in a quiet country-town jail as an "A class prisoner"—a distinction which entitles one to "comforts" including about 60 pfennigs¹ worth of food a day. You can imagine I should be remembering the restaurants and cafes of Berlin for food and drink, if for nothing else.

I am afraid, Heinz² must have given me up as hopeless. But, as I explained before my departure, it is a stage in the process. It must be gone through. No matter whatever may come out of it. To work in India, one must be an Indian, having regard for the Indian mentality. I wish you could make Heinz and August³ see my "petit-bourgeois" point of view in this respect. I hope they do understand. If not, well, it must be left for history to pass the final verdict.

In this letter, nothing much can be written about anything. We can talk about the weather. It is already two weeks that I am in. I am arrested in connection with a case which took place seven years ago—at the time of the fatal Fifth World Congress (of the Communist International). The Government does not seem to be in a hurry

¹ The equivalent is given in terms of German money because the letter was addressed to Berlin.

² The person referred to is the famous German Communist Heinrich Brandler.

³ Professor August Thalheimer, prominent Communist theoretician.

about the trial. It is uncertain when it will begin, and it will surely drag on and on when it does begin. So, I must settle down with something serious to do. First, I must prepare the defence, which I shall conduct personally. Then, I shall utilize the time "to improve my mind", if the wherewithal will be available. Good books are not easily available. Could you ask August to suggest some suitable books? They should be preferably in English; otherwise, there will be difficulty in getting them. They must be procured abroad, and sent straight to me in jail. At last, I have a permanent and very safe address. Everything will reach me. Do send me from time to time some intellectual food. It is very rare in this country. I should like to make a special study of the History of Materialism and of the cultural importance of the Middle Ages. August thinks that I underestimate the latter. You may occasionally throw in a few novels—modern and criminal. Don't take the thing too tragically. We must take things as they come, and hope for better days.

I have rather a hazy idea about what is happening in the world. Have not read newspapers for some time. Shall be getting them soon. What is going to happen to the Democratic Deutsche Republic? Why does not Hitler get seriously on to his job, and be done with it? Then, the things may take shape. Or is Hoover¹ really going to stabilise Hindenburg's throne?

Give my greetings to all the friends. Ask them to write to me a few words from time to time. Heinz should not be very angry with me. I did not lose my head. It still sits on my shoulders, and shall be in its place yet for some time. Don't worry. Could you send me the paper submitted by

¹ Herbert Hoover was the President of the United States then.

the Soviet Delegation to the recent international Congress of History and Science held in London? It is published under the title *Science at Cross-Roads*.

District Jail, Cawnpore,
September 6, 1931.

MORE than a month ago, I wrote the first letter from prison. There should have been a reply by this time. I wonder if you get my letters. I have already written two from jail—to you. I also wrote one to Heinz. Did he get it?

Can you imagine how glad I shall be to get occasionally some words from friends and comrades? I suppose it did not occur to you to write to me straight to the jail, even if my letters did not reach you. But, of course, you could not know in which jail I was. Well, this is a cruel world. It makes unnecessary troubles for harmless people like ourselves. But we shall remake it. And that might not be long hence. I don't think the new world of ours will be a large Merano,² but certainly we shall see to it that it is better than this miserable one.

How is the world treating you? Or how are you treating it? Is it still with the same indifference; or are you thinking of taking more interest in it? Things have changed somewhat lately. This should make some difference—at least of perspective. You know my philosophy. But don't misunderstand.

I wonder if you get the full report of my case. I suppose not. It began on August 31. Now it is again suspended owing to the Magistrate going on holiday under medical advice. I already made my debut in connection with the application for release on bail. The Magistrate, of course,

² I spent some time in that Tyrolian hill station just before leaving Europe.

rejected it. I have appealed to the higher Court, which will hear my arguments tomorrow. He will reject the application again. Then I shall go to the High Court.

It appears that the trial will be over in two or three months. Meanwhile, I am quite comfortable in jail. The time passes between attending the Court and studying law books. In between, my mind is occupied with other things. Besides, for diversion, I am looking up what has been lately accomplished in this country by way of modern literature. It is rather poor. But I have just had a very pleasant surprise. It is an exceedingly good novel—certainly the best in modern Indian literature—and worthy of being counted among the best in the world. Of course, this country must catch up with the world. Therefore, even this excellent book cannot be compared with the literary productions of this age of Sinclair Lewis. But it will stand well in comparison with Anatole France, Ibsen or Zola, for example. It is not yet translated in any foreign language.¹ The central figure of the book is a girl who is a veritable Dionysus. How she pulls down all gods,—customs and traditions, sanctified through ages, and gives sound lessons to young India which piously follows Tagore or Gandhi!

The paper is finished. Only one sheet is allowed. So, I must stop, though I feel like writing on and on.

District Jail, Cawnpore,

October 17, 1931.

THE stack of books, in three packages is received. A classic like Gibbon's cannot be read too often, specially when one has so much time to kill as I shall soon have.

¹ The book referred to is *Sesh Prasna* (in Bengali) by Sarat Chandra Chatterjee.

Only it is a pity that you bought it again. Did you not see it among my books in Berlin? They are all lying in Weil's cellar. As regards Lange, it is a good book of reference, and as such always useful, although it is a very bad history of Materialism. But it is the only one existing in English. The English are so spiritual! The novels are all very welcome. Modern Literature is delightfully futile and woefully sterile. I have found nothing worth reading in it. However, I shall have another look and write to you later in case I find something. I must turn to the classics. I would like to have some authoritative works on the history of Christianity. Feuerbach is not translated in English. But I believe that such an obvious book will be allowed even if it is in an outlandish lingo. The English detest everything "foreign". Do you remember Soames Forsythe's remark after seeing *Carmen*? He was too much of a connoisseur not to be impressed by the music; but he did not feel quite happy because "that girl was so foreign"!

Well, coming back to the classics, I shall also like to have everything Marx and Engels wrote about Feuerbach and the Young Hegelians,—the *Heilige Familie*, for example. I have not even got August's book on Spinoza. That is a long order which need not be filled in a hurry. It is a standing order, so that you may gradually make up for my negligence of childhood, and look after my education, at this belated period. But better late than never! Don't spend too much money on books. Just send me one or two occasionally. I can get a fair amount here as well.

About the novel with the Dyonisian girl, I was also tempted to translate it. But it cannot be done now. You appear to be rather ambitious. Do you intend to add the "divine language" of Tagore to your already large stock? Otherwise, how shall we together repeat the experience

of translating *Hassan*, which was happily "Englished" by the admirable John Anthony. But I warn you: if you learn Bengali and begin with translating a book not by Tagore, your prospect of visiting Santiniketan will vanish. The situation, however, is not so alarming. Tagore's books are all translated, only except the best ones (!) written before he became famous and began to preach in a mystical prophetic language which none could really understand; nevertheless, precisely therefore, they adore it so fervently.

Anyhow, whoever will be responsible for the debut of Sarat Chatterjee's Dyonisian girl in the Western world, will surely pave the way for the Noble Prize for literature going to an Indian for the second time. And believe me, for the second time, the receiver will be no less deserving than the first. Personally, I would place *Sesh Prasna* above *Gitanjali*. My ability to appreciate good literature may be questionable. But it is a matter of taste. *Sesh Prasna* is really a landmark in Indian Renaissance. It has set agog the placid and sickening atmosphere of Bengali romanticism and mystic sentimentalism. The Dyonisian girl is critically compared with Chatterjee's (he is a prolific writer, by the way) previous creations, who smarted, murmured, even revolted, only to bow down their head—of course, always "voluntarily". It would be realism of the highest merit, if Chatterjee allowed his earlier creations to be mercilessly crushed by cruel reaction. But he advanced stage by stage—until producing the Dyonisian girl as a bold standard-bearer—no longer of revolt, but of revolution. The creation, of course, is idealistic. It is bound to be so, in the given conditions of this country. But it is idealism, only from the point of view of "art for art's sake", which point of view itself is the worst form of idealism.

I suppose you are generally informed about the progress of the trial. The proceedings in the Lower Court are closed. The real trial will begin at the Sessions. I don't think it will last long.

I am getting your letters, but have already advised you to write less frequently. Too much "human touch", even indirect, is not compatible with the inhuman atmosphere of my present life. By the way, please don't address the letters for me to "The Superintendent of Jail"! It is *l'escroquerie*. I am only one of the thousand odd prisoners in charge of the Superintendent of Jail.

It is amusing—about Rosenfeld's fate. They are really silly to open their own shop now.¹ Why don't they join us? Or do what one of them has done. I think that is the wisest course to take. I hope they will eventually come to their senses.

This time I have written more than one sheet. It is an exception. "Open Letters" should not be long; that is a principle of orthodox tactics. It is hard to be brief when there are so many things to say. But they must wait until they can be written or said under different conditions. Meanwhile, "wait and pray and live on hay", as the American I. W. W.'s parody the Church song.

¹ Dr. Kurt Rosenfeld, the famous German criminal lawyer, was a member of the Social Democratic Party and as such was the Minister of Justice in the first Republican Government. Later on, he disagreed with the policy of the party and headed its left wing, which, during the crisis precipitated by the stormy rise of Fascism, broke away and constituted itself as the Socialist Labour Party of Germany (Sozialistische Arbeiter Partei) Some of his colleagues joined the Communist Party.

District Jail, Cawnpore,
October 31, 1931.

LONG ago, I received twelve books and duly acknowledged them. Most of them are already read,—particularly the novels. The *criminal* was fine, I mean, the one by Van Dine. I had read his first book previously. His books are supposed to be based upon authentic police records. I doubt the contention that they are really and entirely so. Philo Vance is too esoteric to be real. The "beautiful book" is rather a raw production with some very good and beautiful parts, badly put together.¹ The war gets lost in sex. It is a typical Greenwich Village conception. I wonder if you know what that is. The "Greenwich Village" is situated in the heart of the City of New York. It is American Boheme. I can imagine my friend Mike Gold writing such a book. Only, he might do it better. Excuse this adverse reflection upon your favourite. But if I could dilate, then my verdict would not appear so severe. On the whole, the book is good, particularly, the parts dealing with war. In that, it is better than Remarque. By the way, how is Remarque's second book? I don't want it particularly. He is too popular among the petit-bourgeois "Radicals" to win my approbation. In my opinion, he makes a subtle propaganda for war—unconsciously, of course. This damned careless sporting spirit of his Karl is bound to poison young minds. The petit-bourgeoisie have not taken him up for nothing.

The trial begins in the Court of Sessions on November 3. It will be over in less than a month. My application for bail, which was pending in the High Court for nearly a month, has been rejected. So, I am not going out of

1. The reference is to Ernest Hemingway's *Farewell to Arms*.

my present abode until I do so for good.

I can imagine how miserable you are in the Berlin cold, which I liked so much. The temperature falling below twenty degrees was my delight. I saw it go as far down as forty, and no fuel to heat the house.¹ You are loathing beautiful Berlin, and I am homesick for it. Really, I would like to be back in Europe. When? I am afraid it will never be. For, even after recovering my freedom, I shall be obliged to be away from Europe. I shall never be rich to go on a holiday trip. But what shall I not give for a month somewhere high up on the Alps!

...also wrote me about the dirty job of Clemens (Dutt). I am really surprised. I believed he was a decent sort. How can they stoop so low?²

District Jail, Cawnpore,

November 21, 1931.

I GOT your last letter in ten days only. It is fine. Thanks to the conquests of man, life could be so much happier, if it were not for the stupidities of our modern civilization.

No, I don't want any tobacco. I may just as well get over the bad habit. I shall emerge completely a model man, who does not drink, smoke or swear. The last I never did, though. Only, I cannot resist the temptation of exclaiming "God verdomma!" when I meet a Dutchman and "Kar-

¹ That was in Central Asia during the civil war after the Russian Revolution, and later in Siberia.

² During my trial, Clemens Dutt (brother of R. Palme Dutt) wrote an article in the *International Press Correspondence*, in which I was described as enjoying all sorts of comforts and privileges in jail, while the Meerut Case prisoners were subjected to intolerably harsh treatment.

rambá! " in company of South Americans. They are such resounding and harmless expressions.

I have a feeling of distress while writing these letters. I send them off in the void, never knowing whether they will reach the destination. Anyhow, it is fortunate that once in a while some runs the blockade. I wrote you a long dissertation on your favourite Hemingway book. I hope that letter did not reach. I was rather hard on your favourite; must have been in a very critical mood.

I received Heinz's note with your translation. I shall write to him soon. It is a pity that you get so little news of the trial. It is going on now; so, there may be some report in the English press. Well, we are victims of circumstances, and must be reconciled. I don't want any German newspapers.¹ And next time you send books, send them not direct to me, but to the address of my lawyer.

I am an incorrigible optimist, and I do laugh, although not as I did once before. This year, I have bright yellow flowers in the small yard in front of my cell; but they cannot be sent.

District Jail, Cawnpore,

January 6, 1932.

THE day of judgment is still hanging on my accursed head. I hope you have had a good rest. I can imagine the place to be very nice; most of the places around Berlin are. I used to go occasionally to a place situated among three lakes, forgotten the name. One must travel on a "Kleinbahn" (narrow-gauge railway). I am very glad to know that you have been getting my letters regularly now. After the judgment is given, the correspondence will have to be less frequent, perhaps not oftener than once a month.

¹ No foreign newspapers were allowed to me in jail.

You have been advised to write to the care of my lawyer until further notice. He will forward them to my new place. As soon as I shall take up my new abode, you will be notified.

The books have not yet come. Must have been delayed by the Christmas rush. From the list I can tell that they are just the things I wanted. Yes, this stuff is not available in English. I hope there will be no difficulty in my getting such scientific works in foreign language. I wish to have more of such things, because I am planning a book or two on Hindu Philosophy and Indian Culture. Feuerbach will be very helpful; I shall also want Max Weber's work on Asiatic religions.

I am eagerly waiting for the novels. The last ones were all so good. It was so very thoughtful of you to hunt out another Van Dine. Yes I am in love with dear Vance. I might have been something like him, if I were an idle rich, and escaped being something else.

Before this letter reaches you, you probably will have received a cable about my fate which is expected to be known any day now. In spite of all, I hope you shall have a happier New Year than the last. Did Heinz choose a good bottle at Kempinsky's? But the boor! Did he order red wine for dinner? A German who prefers Burgundy to Rhine should be charged of Hochverrat (High Treason)! Old Kautsky could not explain the theory of surplus value without the illustration of a bottle of Johannesberger!

*Central Prison, Bareilly,
January 18, 1932.*

THIS is the first letter from my new home, where I have been placed since the very day of the conviction. The conditions of life naturally have changed. The change that

will affect you directly, and will be rather sad for some time, (until you get used to the new arrangement), is that henceforth I shall be entitled to write only one letter a month. And in view of the fact that others will also be wishing to hear from me, my letters from now on will be something like circulars which will naturally be very unsatisfactory. But it cannot be helped. These are the consequences which I fully foresaw when insisting upon my decision (to come to India), notwithstanding the misgivings of you all.

I suppose the news came rather as a rude shock. The blow was unexpectedly heavy.¹ It was unexpected for me also. (A sentence struck out by the jail authorities.) I trust you received the news bravely, and can now see the necessity of abandoning your plan, for the time being at any rate. Why should you waste your life? It would be absolutely senseless for you to come in the present circumstances. The only positive outcome will be monthly interviews of fifteen to twenty minutes. One cannot get along, year after year, with such a poor consolation. I am sure you will find it easier among friends than in a strange country.

The case is not yet settled finally. Indeed, in the Court of Sessions, I did not put up my defence. There will be an appeal to the High Court. And I have sufficient reason to expect a substantial reduction of the sentence, if not acquittal. Eight years ago, for the same evidence, others were given four years. There is no reason why I should get so much more. As there is little likelihood of my getting the permission to argue the case myself in the High Court, we shall secure the services of one of the first rate lawyers in the country. It may be another three or

¹ I was sentenced to twelve years' transportation.

Let me begin, then, with the calender.

Just five weeks of the twelve years have passed. Another eleven years and eleven months left. A glorious perspective, unless there were silverlinings to the clouds. Don't gather from this calculation that I am taking my lot too tragically. Nothing of the kind. I am making the best of it. Indeed, the days go by much faster than you could imagine.

One or two words about the uneventful life under these circumstances. I begin the day at the spinning wheel, at which I am doing pretty well. The afternoons and evenings are passed in reading. You have supplied me with very good intellectual food. I shall need more eventually. Below you shall find a list. As I cannot write to all, you will have to divide the responsibility among those who will shoulder it. Our friends in America will send me books and magazines. The latter I want regularly, since it is only through them that I shall be able to keep in touch with the contemporary world, while living in Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

I suppose the news about the case have reached you. The judgment will be an interesting document for our friends there. Preparations for the appeal are being made. But it will be another couple of months before it will be actually heard. Then, as regards the result, in the present condition of the country, one cannot be very optimistic. We shall see. I am curious to know how the news is received by the official people (the Communist International). Here they (those calling themselves the Communist Party of India) have been shameless, I understand.¹

¹ Even after I was sentenced to such a long term of imprisonment, the group calling itself the Communist Party of India carried on their campaign against me, calling me all sorts of names and alleging that I returned to India

I have not had a word from you since my conviction. You will be surprised to know that your letter to the old Doctor came to my knowledge, and I knew what sort of answer you got. That was a foolish step to take. Do you think you can fool people so easily! We cannot get around the fact of space and time, which is almost certain to treat us cruelly, heaven knows for how long. In plain language, I am opposed to what I want the most. It is not a very cheerful prospect to play Penelope. But will it be any less so if you would transplant your lonesome existence from Berlin to this country, supposing (and it is a very big supposition) that the transplantation will be at all a practical proposition. A year or two might be alright to play the dutiful wife, provided that you are given the opportunity to outdo the Hindu wife. Only don't burn yourself, for heaven's sake!

Today only I got my new uniform (jail clothes). It had to be made to order. It seems that people who grow like myself are not expected to be in jail. After all, it is the asylum mostly for the victims of poverty experienced through generations. But I must not plunge into criminology, although this science of the underworld fascinates me. Therefore, I am such an admirer of Philo Vance, though his psychological sleuthing does not correspond with the scientific method. The last book of his is also good. But in places it is too farfetched. *Benson Murder* is the best.

with the help of the Government with the object of disrupting the revolutionary movement, and that the trial and sentence were put-up shows. Some went to the extent of saying (a report to this effect actually appeared in the press organ of the Communist Party of Great Britain), that I was not at all kept in jail, but was living comfortably in a castle in Burma.

The letter could not go off last week. So, I can add something. I hope you are not too much worried by the delay. There is nothing to worry about. I am in good health and cheerful spirit. It is nearly spring already, and I am dreadfully looking out for the beastly heat.

I was telling you about my new uniform. It is, of course, not like the old. You could hardly imagine me in it. I feel like being in a monastery,—mortifying the sinful flesh. It should have some early Christian influence on me. You can imagine how favourable these conditions are to encourage the weakness. It is unfair to be mortifying the flesh with coarse woollen textures and not have Benedictine and Chartreuse Verte to drink as the jolly old monks used to. I suspect they used to put on silken underwear.

I tell you again that you must not buy all the books I want. Others will gladly contribute their share to the cost of my education, if they are given the chance. Provided that I shall have the necessary facilities, my plan is to write two books. One on Hindu Religion, Philosophy and Culture; and the other, a critique of Gandhism (theoretical and philosophical)—not only as an Indian phenomenon, but as a world movement (religious revival, so on and so forth). Then, there has to be a third one, which must come first to set the standard of criticism. That means a book on Materialism—a popular exposition of the scientific view of nature, life and history. This is very necessary for India.

I want material for these works. Everything relating to India, of course, will be found here, and possibly many standard historical classics. But the specialised literature must come from abroad. It is hardly available here. I want August's help, at least as regards the source of materials. I want the literature in English as much as possible. That

will obviate a lot of delay and difficulty.¹ Then I would prefer systematised material. It is so tiresome to read heaps of old junk. I have not got the soul of a professor. Just now I am reading, over again, Feuerbach's *Wesen des Christentums*. Fifty years ago, Engels wrote that parts of it were already then unreadable. It is so much more so now.

The following are some of the books I would like to have. Whewell, *History of the Inductive Sciences*; Leckey, *History of European Morals and History of Rationalism*; Draper, *History of the Intellectual Development in Europe*; Kuno Fischer, *Bacon of Verulam*; Renan, *Averroes et Averroism* (I am afraid, it is available only in French); Oskar Schmidt, *Doctrine of Descent*; Wallace, *Contribution to the Theory of Natural Selection*; Zeller, *Greek Philosophy*; Ueberweg, *History of Philosophy*; Lyell, *Antiquity of Man*; Lubbock, *Pre-Historic Time*; Matter, J., *Histoire Critique du Gnosticisme* (There is no English translation); Mead, G. R. S., *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*; and *Mystical Adventures*; Taylor, *Primitive Culture*; Dalton, *New System of Chemical Philosophy*; Helmholtz, *On the Interaction of Natural Forces*; Keyser, C. J., *Humanism and Science*; Appian, *Civil Wars in Rome*; Broad, *Scientific Thought*; Ritchie, *Scientific Method*; Bertrand Russell, *The Analysis of Matter*.

Most of the classics are in my collection which must be lying in Weil's cellar. Send them on gradually. Of course, all the books need not be sent at once. I propose to spend

¹ I was not allowed to have any books in foreign languages, except for a few very well-known standard works. Even scientific books were not allowed, nor were even novels. Books not proscribed such as *Marx' and Engels' Correspondence* were simply confiscated.

at least six months in studying and gathering materials ; only afterwards I shall begin writing.

Ask all the friends not to give me up as a bloody fool. Until now things have not gone too wide off my calculation, and I am still convinced that it was correct. I am fulfilling certain petit-bourgeois conditions which must be faced in this country. Take life easy, look around the world blossoming out in spring. There will be so much in every bush !

Central Prison, Bareilly,

April 19, 1932.

I HAVE already acknowledged receipt of the other books. They have been very useful. You need not feel ashamed about your last letter. It was not "disorderly" and not too long. Only, you had better leave out politics.¹ I must live on strictly prescribed diet. This caution is necessary so that I may not have to miss any of your letters. Don't send any weekly newspapers. What I wish to have is some magazines, monthly or quarterly.

Tell August that I have taken note of his suggestions about the projected book, and shall be glad to have more. But just now I am working on the book on Materialism. Friends abroad may think that it will be rather superfluous. It will not be—at least for this country. People here have such erroneous ideas about the subject. It must be made understandable to the Indian mind. The arguments

¹ Reference to political matters even in foreign countries was not allowed in my correspondence. Such references used to be struck out making a horrible mess of the letters containing them, and I was often threatened that letters would be altogether held back if they contained politics.

and facts, which are mere commonplace to the European of average education, are still not accepted as such in this country. They are regarded and suspected as products of the "materialist Western civilisation" which is antagonistic to the "spiritual genius" of this holy land. Therefore, I must do something which may appear superfluous. Then, generally, the subject is not quite exhausted.

I am making fair progress on the book, in spite of all sorts of handicaps; and they are to be expected in my present position.¹ Jail is not a university. One is placed there for other purposes than to make scientific researches or to write books. This may be done only by the way.² A prisoner is not the master of his time. First of all, he must perform the task allotted to him. Then, prison cells or barracks are not expected to be studies.

As regards my personal comforts, except for the most necessary toilet articles, I must do with what is supplied by the jail. The trying Judge was pleased to degrade me to B Class. Prisoners of this category, while receiving better treatment than the ordinary run, are not allowed to have

¹ There was a good deal of difficulty about writing material; after conviction I was placed in the B Class, and therefore was not entitled to have any. Eventually, special permission was given, but I was allowed to have only one note book at a time; once that was used up, I could get another only by depositing the old one in the jail office. Consequently, notes made during months of study could not be used for writing later on. Although friends kept me supplied with plenty of books, I could not make free use of them, because I was not allowed to have more than three at a time with me. Consequently, there was almost insuperable difficulty for carrying on any systematic research or use of reference material.

² The Superintendent of Jail actually told me that in so many words.

anything private by way of food, clothes, bedding, etc. Political prisoners are not legally recognized a special class by themselves. The classification is made according to the social status of the prisoner outside.¹

I am keeping fairly good health ; but the heat is getting terrible, and I cannot run up to St. Moritz. So I cannot say that I am feeling splendid. The weather will get still worse. Fortunately, the climate of this place is better than that in other places. It is very dry. That makes the heat less intolerable. The funny thing is that, in the midst of this heat, I had a "slight touch of influenza." You would be delighted to see me wiping my running nose with my shirt sleeves like the President of the U.S.S.R.²

No date has as yet been fixed for the hearing of the appeal. People here are also confident that at least the sentence will be substantially reduced. I hope so. Twelve years in these conditions is certainly not a very bright prospect. No amount of philosophical calm can make it appear so, and I am after all not a "philosopher," having other passions than contemplation.

The description of your jolly evening at Kempinsky's made my mouth water. How delightful it would be to see a bottle of '21 Rhine buried in a shining bucket of ice ; or even a krug of Muenchener at the Wilhelmshallen.

By the way, do you know that Tagore is going to the

¹ All the representations made by myself personally and by friends in India and abroad failed to convince the authorities that, according to their own standards, I was obviously qualified for A Class. I was made to forfeit legitimate privileges on the ground that as an A Class prisoner I should be kept in a District Jail, where the necessary "watch and ward" could not be arranged.

² B Class prisoners were not allowed the use of handkerchiefs.

land of Omar Khayam on the invitation of the King? How these modern Rishis hobnob with kings and Mussolinis and marionettes! I fully share your philosophical optimism, expressed by the wonderful German word "Uebermut." No, there is no true equivalent of it in English. The wild Teutons—the formidable Huns—were passionate. No wonder they ate up all the Belgian babies; therefore, that unfortunate little country is still more densely populated than any other country of the world!

There is no particular message for anybody, because there is none to send except my heartiest greetings for all. I am sorry about the mistakes of Jacob and Paul; but I hope things are bound to clear up before long. And the "happy family" will be celebrating its re-union.¹ And for heaven's sake (excuse the profanity), is it not necessary! I wish I could write at length about the mess made by Teddy. A faint echo of the stupendous foolishness has reached me. It sounds incredible. Will they never recover their senses?²

1 Jacob Walcher and Paul Froelich are veteran Communist leaders of Germany. They were members of the "Communist Opposition" which disapproved of the policy pursued by the Communist International for some time. Later on, they joined the Socialist Labour Party of Germany, founded by left-wing Social Democrats like Dr. Rosenfeld and others.

2 The reference is to Ernst Thaelmann, who became the leader of the Communist Party of Germany after the older leaders like Heinrich Brandler, August Thalheimer, Jacob Walcher and others were expelled. In 1932, Hitler was marching to power. The opposition of the Social Democratic leaders was weak and vacillating. But the working class, particularly the rank and file of the Social Democratic Party which counted in millions, were alarmed and could be mobilized together with the followers of the Com-

Central Prison, Bareilly,
May 21, 1932.

THE date for the hearing of the appeal is not yet fixed. It will not be before the end of July. But I am not anxiously waiting for it. There is no ground for any illusion, although it is generally expected (the lawyers say so) that the sentence will be reduced. We shall see. The future, however, depends on other factors, and it is about them that I am anxious.

Owing to rumours about my transfer to some other jail, none came to see me for two months. Finally, . . . again came last week. He is the nearest one. So he can easily come. Others must travel such long distances.

I am glad to hear that you are travelling about a bit in connection with the work. You must have felt rather strange at home. I can imagine the prevailing atmosphere of "responsibility and culture." Did you discuss your future with the old man? Do you think he will be helpful? Rhineland in spring must have been delightful. Here it is high summer. Now it is late in the evening; yet, with great difficulty I am keeping this paper dry. My clothes are soaked with perspiration. You can imagine the temperature. The rains will not begin until the middle of July; and even then the weather will not be much better.

munist Party, who were also very numerous at that time, into a powerful united front against Fascism. But just at that moment, the Communist Party came under the fatal influence of the "theory of catastrophe," according to which Fascism was to have its course; according to this theory, the Communists actually made united front in action (for example during the Berlin transport workers' strike) with the Fascists, for undermining the influence of the Social Democratic leaders.

Only in November, there will be some relief. But I am withstanding the heat unexpectedly well. One gets used to anything. I have been kindly allowed a mosquito net. That is a real boon. It must be hot now in Berlin also. What are you going to do for the summer holidays? Don't stay in the City. Go for a rest somewhere, may be with some of the "aunts"—not the crying one, of course. the hypocrite! What about the comfortable one? She appears to be a decent sort. Or the one who goes to Ragusa? In any case, you can go and stay with old Fuchs.¹ There are nice woods all around, and the old Sybarite has a good cellar full. You know his theory about Marx, Mehring and Thalheimer? They all knew the taste of good wine, hence their intellectual greatness! Remember me to him. Does he remember that he was the first man I was to look up in Berlin when I came there in 1920? But I arrived just when Kapp and his insurgent army marched into Berlin, and lost track of the Spartakist Fuchs. He was indignant to hear later on that anyone could be so stupid as to fail to find Eduard Fuchs any time in Berlin! I was. But he forgave my sin.

I am glad to know that August is taking such a keen interest in my projected literary venture. His suggestions are valuable. Only I don't quite see what he means by "the special form of Indian logic." In my view, there has been much imagination in this respect on the part of the Sanskritists and Orientalists of Europe. Anyhow, I would like him to be more explicit and precise on the point. I have been also counting on his help as re-

¹ Eduard Fuchs, a veteran German Socialist, friend of Franz Mehring, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg; author of innumerable books on the cultural history of Europe.

gards books and materials. As I wrote already, at first I propose to take up the book on Materialism. I have already been working on that, while gathering materials for the others. I have made satisfactory progress. The skeleton is all ready. All the conventional classics are available here. But I need the latest works on Natural Sciences and specially on the Theory of Relativity. Because, I want to refute Bertrand Russell's view as stated in his Preface to the new English edition of Lange's work (*History of Materialism*). The subject matter of my first book will be "A Scientific View of Nature, Life and History." The object is to prepare the ground for a materialist interpretation of Indian religion, philosophy and culture. From the provisional table of contents given below, it will be easy to judge what books of reference I need.

Introduction: (Enunciation of the thesis—Western Culture is no more materialist than Indian, nor is the latter any more spiritualist.) Chapter 1: Religion; Chapter 2: Philosophy; Chapter 3: Science; Chapter 4: Teleology and Causality; Chapter 5: Theories of Cognition; Chapter 6: Idealism; Chapter 7: Rationalism; Chapter 8: Scepticism, Agnosticism and Atheism; Chapter 9: The End of Religion; Chapter 10: The Renaissance; Chapter 11: The Physiocrats; Chapter 12: Natural Sciences; Chapter 13: The End of Philosophy; Chapter 14: Marxism. All the subjects will be treated historically, thus tracing the development of modern thought—scientific and philosophical.

The sad debacle of Teddy is not unexpected for us; but will the gods draw the conclusion? Oh, how long—how long? You would be amused to know that the other day a high official expressed his condolence for me, saying that I had been unfairly treated by the gods, and that they

had made a great mistake in treating me so. Some consolation!

The remembrance of Robeson makes me homesick. His "Steal Away" haunts me. Then, generally, I long for some grand music—Rimsky Korsakoff, for example, the Overture of "Igor," Beethoven's symphonies. Well, I can chew my cuds. There is plenty of it.

*Central Prison, Bareilly,
June 21, 1932.*

I AM surprised to know that you received only my February letter. I have written regularly about the middle of every month since January. My letters, having been so innocent, written strictly according to regulations, should not be detained anywhere. They would be of no use to anybody. Your letters regularly arrive and are given to me about the middle of the month. In order to guarantee that it continues, you had better cut off political stuff, though it is very very welcome. It would be sad to be without even that much news. But in my present position, one must live on strictly prescribed diet in every respect. Unfortunately, the position regarding correspondence has not improved. I am very sorry about it. For I do wish to write to others occasionally and hear from them directly.

The date for the hearing of the appeal is expected to be fixed by the end of July. Then it will go quick, so that the result may be known by the middle of the next month. I have been having some difficulty about lawyers. There being no chance of my getting the permission to argue the appeal personally, I had to agree to the engagement of a professional—the best man in the country on political cases has been engaged. But he is from Calcutta.

It is very difficult to have him come all the way here to take instructions from me. That would cost a good deal of money. Then, the Court which will hear my appeal is more than three hundred miles away from here, and I shall not be anywhere near the Court when it will settle my fate. Such is law.

I am not a very bad hand at calculation, although sometimes it may appear all wrong in the beginning. The origin of this messiness in my calculation is to be traced to my bad habit at school,—to be away from the class when an old fool pretended to teach algebra without knowing the alphabet.

The intellectual food is not altogether exhausted. Besides, I have it supplemented here. But I need more. In the last letter I sent the provisional contents of the book I am working on now. From that it would be easy to gather the kind of literature I need. August will do that splendidly. Tell him that these days I have been looking rather closely into the Sankhya System of Indian philosophy, and am finding a lot of rather interesting points which can be usefully elaborated. I shall do that in the second book on Hindu Religion and Philosophy. For example, I find therein the Cartesian *Cogito, ergo sum*—literally. There are points of similarity with Epicurus also; and what is most remarkable, some elements of Lockean Sensationalism. But the corresponding social background must be all reconstructed. There is absolutely no historical record which may be used for the purpose. The period itself is a disputed point. Internal evidence proves that Sankhya was the last of the Six Systems. But traditionally, it is placed before all. Well, I can write at length on this matter which is just now occupying my mind entirely—but no space. My immediate requirement is some comprehen-

sive treatise on the development of the natural sciences covering the latest discoveries. Can you not dig my books out of Weil's cellar, and send me some of them?¹

Don't worry about my health, etc. I shall pull through everything. For two months the heat has been fierce, but it will begin to rain soon

Central Prison, Bareilly.

July 11, 1932.

My conditions are not yet improved. So, our correspondence cannot be more frequent. Of course, friends are doing whatever can be done. But things move rather slowly. Then there are others in a similar position. Who can help whom? As regards my writing, I have been using the natural instrument. No type-writer. But that is not the only difficulty, which is not so very great, although I nearly forgot to use the instrument given by God. There are difficulties which render the final accomplishment of my plan problematical. Yet, I have been doing what is possible under the circumstances, hoping that somehow things will straighten out eventually. Within these limitations, I have made a fair progress. But nothing can be sent as yet. There are many reasons. So, the world must have patience! The "masterpiece of the century" may be long in the making.

Don't worry about my intellectual food. The stock is still holding out. And I have had local supplies which are fairly comprehensive. Practically all the conventional classics are available, of course, with some difficulty, in

¹ Later on, I came to know that my books and manuscripts left in Berlin were also seized by the Nazis when they came to power.

my case. What is not to be had, is Marxian literature as well as specialized stuff in science and philosophy.

Enough about books. Your gossips are fine. Keep on giving me regular doses. They are very entertaining in these dreary conditions. Dribblets of news about the feverish state of your adopted fatherland (Germany) reach me. By the way, you will be interested to know that I happen to be acquainted with the Chancellor of the would-be President of the Dritte Reich. The acquaintance took place when he was military attache in Washington, and was trying to awaken the patriotism of the German-American farmers of the Middle West—a job in which he miserably failed. But, for heaven's sake, don't try to make use of the old story. He will be sure to kick you out all the sooner. He has not got a sweet memory of the encounter.

I gather from the bits of news available that in the recent French election the followers of the Lion (Trotzky) have had a great success. Nearly sweeping away the official rivals (members of the Communist Party)! The business in that country, then, must be fully bankrupt. What a sad spectacle! Old Cachin is down. The poor man must die of broken heart. How could he live outside Palais Bourbon—the musty air of which he breathed practically ever since the days of the Convention! And just think of the Chambre des Deputes, without that classical relic of the tradition of the Grande Revolution. What has happened to Doriot? Has St. Denis discarded him? That would be the worst omen!

My "slight touch of influenza" was nothing to worry about. What troubled me really, was the heat. It has been extraordinarily intense this year. The climax is passed; yet, there is no rain. It threatens to be a drought this year. That's what we need—to fill the cup. The heat has

somewhat run me down. But rains and the cold weather will help again, if I shall be still a prisoner. For want of space, I cannot give you a detailed account of my life in prison. That would be so dull, anyhow. One thing, this year there are white flowers in my garden, but they are beyond my reach. (Several sentences are struck out here¹.)

I am expecting some more suggestions from August. On receipt of them, I shall send the revised synopsis of the book. I am very much handicapped by the absence of authentic historical material about ancient India. There is absolutely no critical work. I have discovered what can be called "a forgotten chapter" in the history of Indian thought. From the scrappy and scanty evidence, to be found interspersed through the literature of the opposing triumphant school, the suppressed and lost currents of thought appear to have been somewhat analogous to antique Sophism or later Scepticism. It is clear from some of the commentaries that the object of the Sankhya System was to combat the "heretics" and doubters. In the absence of any historical data of the period, it is very difficult to reconstruct.

Well, the paper is finished before I knew, and there still remain so many things to write.

¹ As a matter of fact, all references to my health and conditions of life in jail were struck out from my letters. At the time of writing this letter, I was seriously ill, having been removed to the hospital. The following note from the Jail Superintendent was enclosed in the letter: "Mr. Roy has not been keeping very fit the past week or two owing to the heat and other causes. He has been advised to confine his mental food to light reading matter only and to completely give up for the present political and allied subjects. I would ask you to confine your letters to light and domestic matters only. I ask this in the interest of Mr. Roy, who is in my charge, executive and medical."

Central Prison, Bareilly,
August 8, 1932.

THE collective message enclosed in your July letters is indeed very welcome. I wish I could answer them all severally. But they must know that it could not be done, and should be content with my heartiest greetings and *Glueckwunsch* (good wishes) for all. In view of the situation, in the midst of which they met, the meeting certainly was a momentous one, and I wish that I could be there. I am really alarmed by the developments, and wonder if the lesson will even now be learned by the Olympian gods.¹

The note attached to my last letter must have caused you anxiety. I am sorry. I did not mention anything in my letter because I thought it was useless to give you all further reason for worry.² You will be glad to know that I am much better now. The heat this year was exceptionally intense, and the rains were very late in coming. Consequently, my old heart trouble recurred, and I was obliged to keep in bed for some time. You know how the trouble affects me—terrible weakness which lingers for months. Since the only remedy, which helped in the past promptly, namely, the air on a high altitude, is not easily available in my present condition, the thing must take its own course.

¹ The reference is to an international conference of Communists opposed to the policy pursued by the Communist International at the time when Fascism was on the point of capturing power in Germany.

² As mentioned in a previous foot-note, the real reason for my not mentioning anything about my health was that it was not allowed. In this letter, I was allowed to refer to my health only to inform that I was better, which was not exactly the case.

Happily, the rain has come at last, though rather insufficiently. Still, it has been a relief. The weather has cooled down much, and lately I have been feeling much better. So, you need not be worried. I hope I shall be well on my feet again before long. It is such a nuisance for one in my present position to be sick. I have been unnecessarily deprived of my only diversion. I am not permitted to do much reading or writing except light stuff.

Owing to the state of my health, my daily life of late has been still more monotonous than before. So, there is very little to write in detail. Besides, it must be done with great circumspection. I stopped the pleasant pastime of spinning nearly three months ago, owing to illness. But in a short time, I had made a good progress in that mediaeval art. Of course, here one does not spin for pretty silk cloth, but for prison blankets. I am placed in a fairly large room with a fellow prisoner. Before, there were two. One has been lately removed. The room is left open all day. Of course, we are locked up for the night. That was a terrible experience during the past months when the heat was intense. During the day, I am allowed to walk about in the yard adjoining the room. But for the last two months, I have not been in a position to do much walking. So, the size of the yard is of no practical consequence. I have one iron cot with straw mattress, a table, a stool and a shelf for my use; besides, some plates, etc., for eating, drinking and washing. On the whole, one in this condition can well manage with these things. Then, personally, I am rather indifferent to these things, you know; although I don't reject the good things of life when they come my way. The food is also tolerable. Of course, it could well stand some supplementing, as I was allowed to do at Cawnpore. The little Raja, being the nearest from

this place, comes to see me almost every month, when we can speak for twenty minutes in the presence of a jail officer and a police officer (some passages struck out). You can imagine what can be spoken under such circumstances.

No date fixed for the appeal as yet. It is rather strange, because usually it is not so much delayed. We expected it by the end of July. Anyhow, it is sure to come up soon. Everybody is very optimistic about it. The lawyer (the best in the country for political cases), who is going to argue the appeal, says that *ordinarily* the chances are ninety per cent to my favour. But don't have illusions. Take note of the word "*ordinarily*." Not only Berlin, but practically the whole world is in extraordinary conditions just now. (Some passages struck out.)

*Central Prison, Bareilly,
September 13, 1932.*

OWING to a bad rheumatic pain in the right shoulder joint, I had to postpone for a week this month's letter. Recently, there has been some change in my condition. (A sentence struck out.) But don't be alarmed. The lingering heart trouble made it necessary to keep me under constant observation; that's all. At last, the rains have come in earnest. The weather has cooled down, and I am sure to be restored to normal health soon.

Other conditions still remain unchanged. It appears that the appeal will not be heard before the end of November. So, I shall have served a year of my sentence before the result of the appeal is known. Are you getting ready for a twelve years' vigil? What a subject matter for a modern classic that would be! But even Penelope took liberties within the limits of antique respectability. There is no reason why the future Homer should not have better

material ready for his classic than the ancient had to imagine. Besides, the modern "Odysseus" will be so very very different—in imaginary virtues as well as real merits! But I am confident that you will not have the chance of living a life which will inspire a modern Homer. People don't read epics in these days of storm and stress.

I am sorry that I cannot report any progress on my book. (Passages struck out) I am not allowed even to do any serious reading; only light stuff is allowed to while away time. My stock of novels was exhausted long ago. It is rather difficult to get any from friends here. However, I did manage to get some. But this country generally is years backward in literary taste, just as in all other departments of life. I have got a wonderful assortment of novels. One is called *The Green Hat* by Michael Arlen, the English ultra-modernist. I was surprised to see that such stuff finds readers in a country which appears to detest "Western Materialism" so much. As for myself, I discovered something which made the book greatly interesting. The heroine, engaged to be married respectably, runs into a friend of her childhood, and falls in love unconsciously (being respectably engaged, she, of course, could not do such a scandalous thing consciously!). Do you know why? Because the man looked at her "like a big dog"! Can you beat it? !

Talking of books, I remember that some time ago there came one—*Agrar-Krise in den Vereinigten Staaten* (Agricultural Crisis in the U.S.A.)—by Julian Gumpertz, evidently sent by himself. I knew him working on the subject in the Frankfurt Institute (of Social Science). By the way, where is he now? He intended to go East to join Agnes Smedley.

I shall be very glad to receive new books, though there is no hurry. Some good novels will be very welcome. I

read reviews of a number of rather interesting new publications. One is the literary child of Galina Sokolnikova—the wife of the Soviet Ambassador to the Court of St. James. The book is called *Nine Women of the Revolution*. It has been very widely reviewed, rather favourably; I am curious to see what Galina has produced—if she has been as successful as an authoress. She is reputed to have been a success as an Ambassadress. Judging from the “Social Notes” from London, she plays the latter role “very gracefully.” The tea parties of Madame Sokolnikova are reported to be “charming,” particularly owing to the “quaint accent,” with which the hostess speaks English. See how much gossip I can pick up! Only silly stuff, naturally. Anyhow, send me Galina’s book. She would send it herself; but that might cause diplomatic difficulties—her husband getting his passport to leave Merry England as an “undesirable alien.” This is a funny world. How does it feel to be an Ambassador at a royal court after having been a window-washer, newspaper editor, military commander and Finance Commissar! Some people seem to relish it.

Things appear to be moving rapidly and remaining stationary in Germany. The outstanding feature of the confusion is the lesson that there is not one patented brand of Fascism. It may have different forms and come in devious ways. We have maintained this point of view from the beginning. But what is the consolation of triumphantly banging upon the table: “I told you so!” It is such a cheap triumph, when the world tumbles down all around. In any case, you have made a good resolution to sit tight until it goes up all in flames in the real Heraclitan style.

Central Prison, Bareilly,
November 6, 1932.

WE get very little news from your part of the world lately. The Cabinet of Monocles seems to be making good. Von Papen, with his devout catholicity and excellent French, should be able to placate the neighbour across the Rhine, specially if he promises to follow Bismarck's policy of "Drang nach Osten". And it seems that he has offered this price in the bargain for equality of armaments. Whatever the Monocles may accomplish internationally. Herr General-Leutnant (Schleicher) has certainly shown impudent Adolf his place. All roads lead to Rome; but there may not always be a "March on 'Rome'". I wonder if you are getting as much news of my country as I get of yours.

.... also wrote to the Superintendent to ask if I could be supplied with a type-writer. That is, of course, out, of the question. As regards the suggestion about my immediate work,¹ I cannot accept it for two reasons: Firstly, in my present position, I cannot write such a book as it should be written; and secondly, I would not be allowed to write such a political book in jail. In any case, I shall greatly appreciate some autobiographical works, which were to be sent for helping me. You mentioned sending some books ("Briefwechsel"—Marx's and Engels' Correspondence etc.) I did not get any. I wonder what happened to them? I am not feeling any great want of books just now. I have not been able to do any serious writing or reading for four or five months. I expect to be able to do so soon. Now the weather is much better, and in winter this place

¹ It was suggested by friends that, while in jail, I should write my memoirs which an American publisher was eager to publish. I was offered a large sum in advance.

has a good climate. So, I shall recover my health. The appeal should come up at least by the end of this month. But there seems to be some mix-up about lawyers. Therefore, I am thinking of making an effort to secure permission to appear in person and argue the case myself. I am not optimistic about the result of the effort. By the end of the year we shall know where we stand. It is strange to think that two years have passed since I left Europe—the other day. The last days there do not seem to be much farther than yesterday. Still, I have been already more than fifteen months in jail—time flies to shorten the distance.

Central Prison, Bareilly.

December 7, 1932.

JUDGING from the bits of news that reach me, the conditions in Germany are indeed hopelessly confused. I should certainly like to see how it looks like there. It is more than two years since I left. The time, paradoxically, appears to be very long and very short. I can hardly believe that it was two years and eleven days ago that I stood on the platform at Verona. Many things have happened in the meantime. The world has lived in these two years perhaps ten times as much as its normal life. But the memory does not seem to be more than a day old.

I am rather disturbed to know that you had to give up your favourite agrarian studies. But you have been making up your mind for some time. The journalist with whom you are working now must be an amusing specimen. He must have felt quite optimistic when the Monocles came to office. How does he feel about it now? The blue blood of the Herrenklasse (aristocracy) does not seem to serve the purpose of an operation à la Steinach on the prostrate body of Germany. Although fully in agreement with

August theoretically, I am not so optimistic about the future of the gentleman with moustache a la Chaplin. I am rather inclined to believe that he has overplayed his hand. The cult must have its specific form in Germany.

My health is much better now. I am no longer in hospital. Since the beginning of the cold weather, there has been no perceptible trouble with the heart. It is rather cold here, and I feel it much more than last year. In a month, I shall be a whole year in this jail,—one twelfth of the sentenced term. When I came here, it was middle of winter. Yet, I did not need more than one blanket in the night. This year, I shiver even with two, and three are intolerably heavy. (Passages describing the blankets given to prisoners are struck out.)

There does not seem to be much chance of my being resorted to the A Class. If social status is to be measured only by richness, then my claim to the distinction is not tenable. Well, I am getting used to the conditions of life, and I can get used to anything. Of course, it does tell upon general vitality. (Passages struck out).

The improvement of my health has enabled me to resume work on the projected book. But it proceeds rather desultorily owing to other difficulties. (Already described in a footnote). I am not keeping up the rate of progress made in the beginning. Lately, I have been doing a number of rather longish essays on a variety of subjects. I have just finished a very interesting one: *On the Historical Role of Islam*. I am very satisfied with the product. Another, also finished, is *Some Reflexions on the Hindu Ideal of Asceticism*. I do not know if these can be sent out. If I am allowed to do so, you may get them some day. In any case, they are written for the Indian reader, and their publication abroad will not be of any great value.

I regret to say that I am not in a position to report much about new Indian literature. I receive practically no books in Indian languages except those in the jail library. (Passages struck out). But not much is missed by this handicap. India has little to say as yet by way of modern literature. As a matter of fact, the intellectual level is decidedly lower than it should be on the eve of anything great happening. This discrepancy is so striking as to supply food for serious thought. One of my essays has been devoted to this subject. It is entitled *Philosophical Revolution*. The Bengali novel I referred to last year still remains the high-water mark. But I don't think it will be worthwhile translating it. Although interesting to readers with a sense of historical relativity, the book will not impress the average European. It will appear even more flat than Ibsen or France appears to-day.

I am glad to know that our family (the international organisation of Opposition Communists) remains so firm and optimistic. I am thankful for the good wishes of all. Please, communicate to them my heartiest greetings. I eagerly look out for the day when I shall again have the pleasure of being with those good old friends—may be in this country !

Central Prison, Bareilly,

January 9, 1933.

FOR me today also is an anniversary. It is a year since my conviction, and twelve months passed in this jail. I have not been keeping as well as I expected to do in the cold weather. But please don't worry. I will somehow see the voluntary ordeal through. Only I hate to be sick in this condition. I have always been proud of my iron constitution. It would be a downright betrayal should it fail me

when I need it most,—in this helpless situation. (Passages struck out) I am sure that there is nothing serious, and it will all pass over sooner or later. I detest the idea of returning to the world an invalid. No, that is impossible; it will never happen.

It is a pity that you had to pass the Sylvester (New Year's Eve) slaving for the cause. But I can hardly imagine a number of good deutsche souls letting the Sylvester Nacht pass by without a jolly drink, even as an aftermath of a wearing political discussion. Your Hohenzollern journalist would make you crazy if you did not have some diversion once in a while.

There came a Christmas package from The Americans are so punctilious. I am told the package contains shaving things and toilet articles. I don't know how much I shall be allowed to use. No use sending such things. Books and magazines are the most useful things. I understand they are being sent plentifully by friends. But I have not received any for more than two months. The large package of books you have sent has not yet come. Previously, some also have similarly disappeared. It is really distressing. Apart from the loss, just think of me with no intellectual food!

Since the Lucknow friend had to go away, none has come to see me for various reasons.¹ Firstly, it is so useless that I have forbidden people to come from distant places. Then, many are themselves in my position, (in jail). Regarding the behaviour of the little prince, I have little to say except that I am surprised. But his defection is not

¹ Numerous friends from different parts of the country were eager for interviewing me, but their applications were always rejected on the ground that only relatives could have the permission to interview a prisoner.

a serious matter, and the friends there should not be anxious about it. The difficulty has been only personal, to myself, which is of minor importance. It has been a downright desertion. I am also of the opinion that the prince's defection is rather degeneration—relapse into old habits as soon as the personal influence has been removed. Nothing solid could be built on such a shifty foundation. So, there has been no great loss.

I have much to write about what August had to say in your last letter. But I cannot do it now at length. Only one or two remarks. Sankhya's affinity with Epicuros is in the idealistic foundation of both. This might be a startling assertion. But I find Epicuros sacrificing physics for metaphysics (rather eithics) much more consciously than Marx and others thought. As regards Sankhya, he is certainly no materialist. But his idealistic deviations also hang in the air. Therefore, we can take much of him critically. Charvak is practically all lost. I am making some efforts to reconstruct from whatever little can be gathered from the writings of his opponents, particularly the mediaeval scholastic and theologian Sankaracharya. The corner-stone of Materialism in Indian philosophy is to be found in the Vaisheshik System of Kanad—one of the six main Schools which exist in the usual Indian aphorismic form. Kanad, approximately a contemporary of Democritos, also expounded a sort of Atomism, and his *Brahman* has no more a real existence than the creator in the systems of Descartes and Newton.

I am so glad to know that friends there are still so fond of me. It will certainly be a great day when we shall all be together again. I am sorry that I cannot write to them directly. One thing that is sure to please them is that every day which passes convinces me all the more of the

correctness of my views about things concerning me directly. The Big Heads are simply crazy. They feed themselves on mere imagination. What they talk about simply does not exist but in their feverish dream. If we want to do anything, we must not try to make bricks without straw; must work with what is given, and this realistic appreciation bears out the correctness of my views. Let them see who have eyes. The rest may have their depraved imagination. The future belongs to us.

The appeal was to have been heard on January 9. But it has again been postponed. I had an interview with one of my lawyers the other day. I have been granted the permission to be present in the court, not to argue the case in person, but to instruct the counsel. I shall try my best to make him keep on the lines of my statement.

Central Prison, Barcilly,

February 6, 1933.

THE Sylvester letter received, the day before yesterday. But unfortunately, the message from the friends assembled there at that time, mentioned in the letter, did not come. In any case, I feel the message, and am very glad. I am, of course, very anxious to know all about the deliberations of the friends assembled. They must have been momentous. It is a great misfortune to live these fateful days as I am doing. But the consolation is that it is done by choice, so that the situation will be less unfortunate in more fateful days.

It was a great joy to receive the cable. Just a few days ago, I had written you reminding of my anniversary. Your grim determination to ride over so many more two years is really pathetic, and at the same time extremely gratifying. But there is no reason to be more pessimistic

than to face reality. I don't think I shall have to receive many more anniversary greetings like the last. Perhaps one more would be just about enough. Don't forget my calculations. They will prove to be exact, of course, sufficient discount to be made for freaks of the situation.

The sudden and surprising disappearance of the friend who was entrusted with management of the case has naturally confused matters considerably. But the situation has been repaired somehow. The behaviour of the friend, nevertheless, remains a mystery. His subsequent attitude, therefore, should not surprise us. The difficulty is that all my other friends are either *hors de combat* (in jail) or in distant parts of the country, thus being unable to attend to my affairs constantly without injury to their regular profession etc. This places me in a rather isolated position. But I am positively against their travelling several days to have a twenty minutes interview with me. This, coupled with my inability to correspond with anyone (because of the limitation of correspondence to once a month), has made the isolation complete. It cannot be helped. The situation was a good deal different when there was a friend nearby who could see me once a month without undue disadvantage.

This isolated position has made it impossible to get books in the country, and that is a great difficulty. Books sent from abroad have not been reaching me for a long time. I am very mystified about it. But this time, no less than four lots are overdue. (Passage struck out) Magazines sent from America also come very irregularly. This is all very distressing, because I am nearly out of stock, and there is little possibility of replenishing it locally. I shall certainly like to have some new German novels, and don't think

that there will be any difficulty in their being passed, provided that they will reach the destination. Of course, they cannot be passed if they disappear before reaching the prison, as the others seem to have.

I regret not to be able to report any progress of my literary work. In addition to other difficulties, resulting from my position, the state of my health is in the way. Nevertheless, much ground-work has been done. But since the beginning of January, I have again been bed-ridden (passages struck out). The winter is nearly over. The trouble began with my inability to stand the heat last summer. Now another stares me in the face. I am afraid of being a physical wreck. While arguing against the project of my coming, Heinz talked about "umbringen" (kill). At that time, I ridiculed the idea. Now I am hoping that he would prove a false prophet. From past experience I know that only a change to a mountainous climate will enable me to tide over another summer. But a prisoner has no choice. Nevertheless, he can expect not to be compelled to do more than he has contracted.

*Central Prison, Barcelona,
March 6, 1933.*

SOME of the books have come at last. Thirty-eight volumes altogether. But there was no list enclosed. Now I am not so pessimistic about books as I was in my last letter. Although the books sent from America have not yet come, I hope they also will turn up one of these days. They travel a longer distance.

About my health, there is little to add. (Passages Struck out) Pulling some wire in London might help. But try to have it done through others instead of going yourself. Rosenfeld might be helpful. He might still approach the

exalted Highness of the Right Honourable the would-be Earl of Lossiemouth (passages struck out). But I doubt if anything more practical will ever be achieved. The summer is nearly here. In another month, it will again be like being roasted in a furnace. Perhaps I shall be able to stand the ordeal better this year. One year's experience must have some positive value! In any case, I can only wait and see, and be determined to brave it all.

In comparison with the terrible ordeal of you all living in the Dritte Reich, my personal troubles are so insignificant that now the less said about them the better. I shudder to think what might be happening to many even now. What a terrible price shall have to be paid for mistakes which could be so easily avoided! I wonder how the Olympian gods are taking it. Did they learn anything from the Finnish experience? It depends upon the actual victims of the fiasco. The ruins must be repaired from the bottom up. The remedy will never come from above. No use arguing from such a distance, and certainly I do not claim to judge better than those on the spot. But it appears that the actual ruler of the Dritte Reich is rather the Herr General-Leutnant than Adolf? Anyhow, whatever may be the facade, the content is the same. I am anxiously waiting for the bits of news which may reach me about the result of March 3 (the first election held under the Nazi regime). "Arithmetic victory"—will there be even that?¹ How will you be personally situated in the Dritte Reich? I presume, if you can somehow manage to camouflage, your nationality might protect you. The Dritte Reich will hardly be as inhospitable to "damned foreigners" as its vanguard thundered. That was mostly for the gallery. Be-

¹ In the previous elections the total number of votes cast for the Communist candidates had been steadily increasing.

sides, in the inevitable quarrel with the French, the patronage of Uncle Sam cannot be trifled with.

In one of the American magazines, I read some encouraging news about the affairs in England. Harry Pollitt was reported to be rebelling. That would be great. His defection would knock the bottom off the whole show there.

My appeal will be heard on April 6th. I hope there will be no more postponement. There has been some messing about from our side. The sudden departure or defection of the prince confused the situation. Even now it does not appear that everything has been fully straightened out. I have not yet had an interview with the senior counsel who will argue the case. He was not present in the lower court. I have no idea how I shall be able to hit it off with him. Any hitch at the eleventh hour will be very unfortunate. I hope to manage somehow. Where is the little Raja now? I am inclined to believe that his sudden political scruple is all nonsense. Tell the friends there that he need not be taken seriously.

There is little progress to report about my literary work. I am afraid it will not be accomplished as originally planned. There are all sorts of difficulties. Systematic work is not possible under the given conditions. Health permitting, I shall do whatever is possible, so that the time of the ordeal may be of some use. The essays written already are at random efforts,—nor so many links in a chain. Any work done will have to be in this form, I am afraid. That is unfortunate. The raw materials for one book are all gathered. But they cannot be properly used.

The new lot of books will last for some time. Eventually, I shall like to have some more of the latest scientific works. Let the American friends attend to them. They are mostly published in their country. Did you ever write

to Sneevliet of Amsterdam? Send him my heartiest greetings. You know that he is a follower of the Lion? Now that the master is free, he must be very busy. But we have been good friends for a long time, and I have had many reasons to count upon his personal loyalty.

District Jail, Allahabad,

April 6, 1933.

I AM experiencing life in the third jail. Heaven knows how many more I shall see before I am free. This is a temporary abode. So, you keep on writing to the Bareilly address until further notice. But I do hope that I shall get transferred to a higher and cooler place. Otherwise, this summer may prove too much for me.

I can well imagine the conditions there, and that makes me forget my troubles. When I read of our presidential candidate,¹ together with the members of the proud second largest party in the Parliament being transported to jail in their night shirts, I must cease complaining about myself, which of course I never did or will do. I do hope, personally you will not get into any trouble, and my particular friends will escape the worst. They had their turn in 1923 and after. Now let the other chaps have their deserved. Oh, what a crowd of imbeciles, one is almost provoked to say, criminals! It is so cheap to exclaim "We said so"; and that gives so little satisfaction. I wish we had rather proved false prophets. It is painful. Let us hope that the fall, for which they rode, would not break their neck irreparably. Is there any sign of the desire to repair the ruins?

¹ The Communist Party of Germany put up Ernst Thaelmann as the candidate for the presidency in the election held on March 3, 1933.

My appeal is rather in a mess. At the last moment, the counsel, engaged to argue the case, failed to turn up, having gone to England in the meantime. I have received the permission to appear in person. But there is so little time to prepare that I am doubtful of my performance. I am trying for a brief adjournment. If it is not granted, then the show will begin after three days. But it will be almost a month before the result will be known. A junior lawyer here is helping me. He is already in correspondence with Dr. Rosenfeld. But the latter must have his hands full just now, and may be in danger himself. Adolf is sure to remember the drubbing Kurt gave him some months ago in a libel suit in Munich.

It is very kind of your brother to think of me. I wish he would send me some latest works on theoretical physics, (Eddington, Jeans, Rutherford, Pickering and the like) and biology. Those books are rather expensive. The poor chap must be broke in this crisis; or is he a Roosevelt man? Also advise Jay what sort of books I wish to have.

My health is more or less the same. But don't worry much. You cannot do anything, anyhow. Owing to this state of my health and other restrictions, I cannot report any progress in my work. This pains me more than anything else. I want so much to do something useful. But simply cannot. Lately, it was practically impossible. However, since the progress (about some long essays) reported several months ago, I did manage to finish a piece of work (it will be a small size book) on materialist thought in antiquity, including India. It is not as I wish to make it, for lack of material. But it is a good skeleton which can be filled in when opportunity arises. I don't know when that will be.

April 10, 1933.

I appeared in the court today. The case has been postponed until the 25th on my application. I was not at all prepared to argue today, having not yet with me some of the important papers of the case. Now I shall have time to get all the papers, and prepare well. Besides, I may try to engage another competent lawyer, who may be able to argue the case on such a short notice. I am rather too weak to stand the strain, and my legal advisers and friends are of the opinion that it would be after all more useful to have the case argued by a professional man. My arguing the case, may have a result contrary to the desired.

Where is the little Raja? Still in Berlin? I presume that his projected world tour was to be eastward. If you see him, tell him that I feel that all my difficulties about the appeal are due to his desertion. Yes, he is a deserter. There is no satisfactory explanation for his shameless behaviour.

Why not consider a visit across the Atlantic with your brother if he comes this summer? The God's country may have still more peace and prosperity, though Hoover is gone! I am worried about what you are going to do in the midst of the turmoil. I received the "Weltbuehne" long ago. Is it still coming out? Even after the Nazi crusade against the intellectual elite? By the time I return to Bareilly, there will be a letter from you waiting. I hope it will not bring too much bad news, although one should expect anything happening there now.

Central Prison, Bareilly,

May 5, 1933.

THE result of the appeal must have reached you by cable. The sentence is reduced by half. It is more than I expected. Now we shall try the Privy Council. Unfortunately,

Dr. Rosenfeld's services may no longer be available. I wonder in what position he himself is by now. The lawyer who appeared for me in the High Court (Dr. K. N. Katju) is going to London. He will reach there by the end of the month. Had I known before, that you would be in Paris, I could have asked him to see you there. He is taking along all the papers of the case to hand them over to some solicitor in London with the necessary instructions. Dr. Rosenfeld has been notified to that effect, and requested to go over to London to meet Dr. Katju if he is in a position to do so. Otherwise, Dr. Katju has been instructed to get in touch with Brockway and act according to his advice. Please write to him immediately, asking him to make the necessary arrangements, in case Rosenfeld fails to come. In the first place, a solicitor must be found to take over the case from Dr. Katju; then a Barrister shall have to be engaged to argue the case. As regards the solicitor, I cannot make any suggestion. Anyhow, it is not of importance. The work of the solicitor—to prepare the case and instruct the Barrister—will be done by Dr. Katju. Only, he will have to return soon. As regards the Barrister, I presume that the services either of Sir Henry Slessor or of Sir Stafford Cripps could be easily secured. Brockway will arrange that. Dr. Katju is very optimistic about the case. So, the best possible arrangement and quick action in London are desirable. Then, my ordeal may be over earlier than expected. I had an idea to get Clarence Darrow from the U.S.A. to argue the case. Our friends there could arrange that easily. Now, Einstein's being there would make it still easier. But considering all sides of the question, it appears that an English Barrister should be preferable. The main thing is to avoid unnecessary delay.

Your long letter from Strassburg came several days ago. What a lot of exciting news it contains! I hope you find Paris more agreeable than the provincial capital, under papa Painlevé's patronage. But I hate the idea of your being separated from Heinz, August etc., whose friendly attention must have made your lonely life somewhat cheerful. You must keep in close touch with them, and they themselves may eventually drift into Paris. I thought they would go to Sweden. In Paris, see Barbusse and Doriot. I do not know if the latter is still a member of the Chamber. In any case, you can easily find him. He is a "linie" man (member of the official Communist Party), but we were great friends, and he is suspected of stepping into the temple with the right foot.¹ Barbusse you will meet through the German emigré literati, or directly, as you like. He might go over to London to see that the things about my case are properly arranged. Also write to Sneevliet. He will certainly come to Paris to see you. It takes only six hours from Amsterdam. Of course, he must be sweating for the great Lion. But you will be surprised to know that I occupy no less a place in his generous heart. The sentimental Dutchman! He will certainly hop over to London to hurry up things, if he can.

I am terribly worried about your jumping from the frying pan into the fire. The fire may burn more strongly in one place than in another. You will have to enter your country of adoption still as an "alien." The Japanese

¹ Jacques Doriot, one of the leaders of the French Communist Party in those days, was removed from the leadership, suspected of being sympathetic towards the Opposition. Later on, he was reinstated, but soon he became the object of new attack from the more orthodox, who accused him of retaining his "right deviation."

system of long distance marriage—with “picture brides” is not in vogue in this country. If I were sure that the fire in this country would not be more consuming than in Europe, I would not repeat my old boring counsel of patience.

Don't worry so much about my health. It is better now. Fortunately, the summer promises to be mild this year. It is late in coming, anyhow. It is still delightfully cool and raining a lot; and the summer rain here is entirely different from the winter rain in Berlin. So I feel quite well just now, and hope to keep on feeling well.

I am afraid my books in the cellar of the Malik Verlag are gone with the Verlag itself.¹ That is a great pity. It will be difficult to get together such a collection again. Well, compared to other disasters, my loss will be negligible. I can do nothing but helplessly look on. It is a poor consolation to have proved prophets. The Olympian gods are hopeless. The ruins should be repaired from the bottom up. Now Heinz will understand what is to “repair the ruins”. Do you remember his logical objection to this title given to one of my articles?²

¹ The Malik Verlag was a publisher of modern literature. The German edition of my book *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China* was published by them. It was closed down by the Nazis and all its properties confiscated.

² The German Communist leader Heinz Brandler was a building worker. When I wrote an article entitled “Repair the Ruins,” suggesting methods for undoing the harm done by the ultra-leftist policy of the Communist International, pursued ever since 1925, Brandler objected, jokingly remarking that “the building workers do not repair the ruins, but remove them.”

*Central Prison, Bareilly,
June 10, 1933.*

I AM very glad to know that you like Paris, and have found yourself among so many old friends. Your letter, so full of news and graphic description of the congregation in Paris, made me homesick. I never cared for that Mecca of the intellectual snob. I suppose it was because of the general raving about it. As a matter of fact, I was not much impressed by Paris, except abstractly by its historical and cultural tradition. I found it a rather uncomfortable place to live in. Specially, the concierge—what a monstrosity! I could not find in that city of cafes a single place where one could pass an agreeable afternoon, as we used to do for example, in the 'Cafe am Zoo', 'Jester', or 'Gerold am Knie' in Berlin, not to mention the 'Bacchus Bar' on that little Italian river. I try hard to imagine which Paris café is being frequented by the victims of Hitlerism. There must be an epitome of the 'Romanische Cafe' (meeting place, in pre-Nazi days, of the Berlin intellectuals and bohemians). I suppose the famous (I should call them, notorious) 'Dome' and 'Rotonde' must be still flourishing.¹ If they are by any chance frequented by our friends, I hope the atmosphere will change. But there must be too many more serious problems than can be solved around tables progressively loaded with stacks of saucers with the price marked on them. How I would like to be there, with all my dislike for Paris! So very homesick I am that I have nearly promised myself a few months holiday, if by any chance we shall succeed at the Privy Council. In that case, I shall at once make a dash, and I am sure to find Paris all new!

¹ Cafes in the Montparnasse quarter of Paris.

Another thing that makes me homesick for Europe is the deviation of the Gulf Stream and the good sense of the sun to efface its brazenness once in a while. Here, the summer is at the height of its glory, belying my premature optimism. But they say that the rains will set in soon. That would hardly make much difference, anyhow. It is after ten in the night; yet, I can keep the paper from getting soaked with perspiration only with great difficulty. Hot winds from the Sahara or Arabia—heaven knows from where—have been blowing all day and will not stop until two or three in the morning. To picture my condition, I can only remind you of Dante “lying in the Inferno contemptuous of the fires of hell.” Well, until now I am getting along somehow. There is little hope of any change in my condition. So, don’t worry so much.

It is pathetic to imagine you so over-joyed by the result of the appeal. You seem really to have had made up your mind for twelve years! I did not. Nor do I take six seriously. And even in that case, I may be out after another three years, and there may be an opportunity even a year earlier.

I hope your optimism about my library is not unfounded. The English manuscript of the China book was there, together with other unpublished and unfinished manuscripts. They will be an irreparable loss. My friends in this country have only an incomplete copy of the China manuscript. In case the manuscript is not lost, it will be useful to attend to the publication of the book in French and English. I am sure, few of the German books will survive Nazi vandalism. For the English edition, some American publisher should be approached. Barbusse will help about the French edition.

I wonder how Doriot received you. If you have hit it off well, give him my heartiest greetings, and the serious advice that these are grave days when shilly-shallying must end. I am glad to know that Kurt has made up his mind.¹ Better late than never! Congratulate him in my behalf. Tell him that I hope he will be able to persuade his old associates—of Britain also—to follow his example. I am distressed by the news about the partners of Heinz and August. Poor chaps! They must be depressed. I wish I was with them. I hope experience has taught them the correctness of my attitude—no new shop, but flood the Linie with new share-holders enlisted by us.² That is the only way to the much needed amalgamation, and recovery from the crisis. August inclined towards this policy, when after the election in Saxony he expounded the theory of “kritischer Kopf,” (Critical Head) to the indignation of the incipient minority.

Please get some French books for me. I should like to have Jaures’ *Histoire*; Bayle and Montaigne. No more space. So, must close, although there is so much more to write.

¹ This was written on receiving the report that the veteran left-wing Social Democratic leader of Germany, Dr. Kurt Rosenfeld, had decided to join the Communist Party.

² I was opposed to the Communists opposed to the then official policy of the Communist International, and consequently expelled, establishing a separate organisation. I advocated the policy of their working just like members of the Communist Party, carrying on propaganda according to their views, and advising the supporters of those views to join the official Communist Party. I was of the opinion that, pursuing that policy, opposition Communists expelled from the official parties would thus be able to extend their influence in the rank and file of the parties, and eventually change their policy.

Central Prison, Bareilly,

July 14, 1933.

I ANXIOUSLY wait for your monthly letters—all the more because now you are living in the midst of a situation subject to kaleidoscopic and potentially catastrophic changes. I do hope that France will not be affected by the epidemic—in the near future, at any rate. You were so pessimistic in your last letter about the spread of the epidemic. I feel that it will consume itself before long. Indeed, signs of exhaustion are already discernible. The S. A. heroes (Nazi Storm Troopers) are beginning to grumble. That may be the beginning of the end. At any rate, France seems to be still pulling on with the superannuated maid, democracy; although I remember prophets shouting as far back as 1924—"Le Fascisme est là!" The hectic Susanne used to Ruth Fischer it in Paris in those days of our unfortunate Grischa's faded glory.¹ Only last night, I was reading in the "Review of Reviews" an article by "One Who Knows From Behind the Scene," full of gloomy forebodings about the fate of the Third Republic; talking about the possibility of a new Eighteenth of Brumaire—of whom? I wonder. The Corsican Dynasty is extinct, and a French Hitler or Mussolini is still to appear on the scene. It all sounds so far-fetched. In short, I feel that you will find your place of birth tolerable, at least for some time. Meanwhile, anything may happen.

Our "Der Tag" (The Great Day) is quite far off. Four years are four years. I should certainly prefer to celebrate

¹ The reference is to Susanne Girault (leader of the Communist Party of France for a short time in 1924); Ruth Fischer was the leader of the German Communist Party about the same time, for a longer period; and to Zinoviev, respectively.

it by your taking me out of these walls than my going to have a look over old Europe. Of course, this prospect is very tempting. Lately, I have been feeling keenly the want of certain things of the world at large. For example, I crave sometimes for good music. The thing I remember most vividly about Paris is an evening in the Opera to hear "Thais" (text by Anatole France). The Overture depicting the suppressed, but tormenting passions of the fool who climbed up on a pole, was simply grand.

I am very much distressed to hear that our friends are having so much trouble with the Swedes.¹ Please, tell August and Heinz that I am in full agreement with their attitude, and am in favour of maintaining it under all conditions. The idea of opening a new shop in these days of depression is not only foolish, but will be an unpardonable crime. Only the monumental egoism of the Lion (Trotzky) can think of such a thing at this moment. Indeed, in view of the situation, I would go to the extent of suggesting the liquidation of our own business, had there been any real change on the part of the Linie. In any case, I would look out for any possible opportunity. Let it be clearly understood, nevertheless, that I have not changed my views in the least. But there are such things as emergency measures. This opinion of mine may be placed before the coming meeting of our Board. By the way, where is the Lion now? I only read about his dramatic appearance in Denmark.

Central Prison, Bareilly,

August 10, 1933.

ON the 21st of the month, I completed two years in jail,

¹ Some Opposition Communists in Sweden joined the Social Democratic Party at that time.

including the under-trial period. I still feel time flying as quick as ever, bringing us nearer and nearer—in time, if not in space; and in these days of mechanical transportation, a few thousand miles hardly count. Apart from the chances in the Privy Council, and other possible wind-falls, I may not have to serve actually more than four years and a half. In that case, less than three years remain, and there is still another possibility—of my release on serving half the sentence. I hope these optimistic information will bring some consolation to your present life of wander and uncertainty. I am prepared for the worst, and know you will also face the situation as bravely as you have done until now.

I have been waiting to hear from you to write to Cripps directly about the case. Meanwhile, you can write to him that, in my opinion, the crux of the case is the legality or otherwise of the attempt to organise a political party; in view of the fact that a similar party exists in Britain legally, it cannot constitute an offence in India, the particular law being identical in both the countries. Considering the result of the appeal in the Meerut case, I should expect to get redress in the Privy Council. In the Meerut case, fourteen prisoners are released, and the sentence of the remaining thirteen is reduced to practically nothing. Of course, we are entitled to draw other conclusions from this fact, and may do so with satisfaction. I mean, the fact of the disparity of sentences.

(Passages struck out) You and other friends will not be glad to know that, for various reasons, the work on the projected books has practically stopped. I am very distressed about it. Yet, I am hoping against hope—to accomplish something, somehow. You know how I feel when months and years of this tiny moment, called human life,

flit away without my being able to do anything useful. I really feel like a "contemptible bit of crawling protoplasm", as life is aptly defined by some cynical ultra-modern biologist.

Lately, I have been again reading Feuerbach's *Das Wesen des Christentums*. For backward countries like India, it is still of immense actual value. The intellectual life of this country generally is so very shallow and woefully sterile of originality. A book like this would place before the self-satisfied and sanctimonious Indian intellectuals a picture which may just as well be a likeness of their cherished nonsense. In any case, it might teach the few hopefuls how to look at sacred institutions and sanctified prejudices. They might get to know the past of their blessed montherland as it really was, not as it is imagined to have been. For all these considerations, I have been thinking of translating the book, as the only useful work that I could do in my present position. I do not remember if the book had an English edition. In any case, it must be long out of print. Of course, from a possible English translation much of the original text could be profitably left out—the sentimental drivel about "Liebe" (love) and the "Menschenkultus" (cult of man). By the way, there are some words for which I shall not be able to find exact English renderings. How should you translate the title, for example? "Essence" won't do. Then, the word "Wesen" is used throughout the text in a variety of sense, which have to be expressed by different English terms. Another intriguing word is "Gemuet". How should you translate it? Its adjective form is so very different! Well, this is only a possible plan—not yet quite made.

I wonder if you could send me the new book of Bergson—*Les Deux Sources de la Morale et de la Religion*.

According to a review in an American magazine, Bergson has changed his mind since he wrote *L'Evolution Creatrice*, twenty-five years ago. It is said that in the new book religion and dogmatic ethics are subjected to the same criticism as was directed against science in the previous book. It must be a curious performance. Therefore, I am also curious to read it. I wonder if the philosopher's democratic French soul is alarmed by the political rendering of his doctrines in the neighbouring land.

How are all the friends? The wandering Jews of the twentieth century!

Central Prison, Barcilly,
September 22, 1933.

UNFORTUNATELY, our correspondence is again disorganized. Last month your letter came very late—two weeks delay in transit! This month it came in time, but the tempting fruit remained dangling before my eyes for a whole week.¹ In future, don't post your letter earlier than the second mail of the month. Otherwise, no advantage will be derived from the air mail. Letters would reach me just as late as if they came by the ordinary mail. It seems that my letters take more than two weeks to reach you. If you got my last letter on the thirtieth, it had travelled three weeks. The aeroplane carrying it could not have taken a trip around the world! Even in that case, it won't take so long. It is all so distressing. But, helpless.

I am enclosing a letter for Cripps as you wished. You might try Brailsford, if Brockway should be always so very

¹ A letter was not delivered to me before a month had passed after the previous one had been delivered. So if one letter happened to be late, the next one was held back for a similar period.

busy with his futile international politics. Brailsford seems to be out of it now. So, he must have more time for odds and ends. Poor old soul! He had high hopes for Macdonald. Until now no harm has been done by this delay, because the appeal could not have been filed any earlier. It is the summer recess, and the noble lords must have all dragged their gouty bones to different Spas on the Continent.

Don't worry so much about my health. I don't write about it every time, because sometimes I forget, and sometimes the miserable sheet of paper is finished before I could have written a few words on other important things. There has been nothing particular to complain about my health lately. The old trouble (heart etc.) remains. The latest is some rather nasty trouble with the teeth. It seems that I am developing a bad case of pyorrhoea, and that makes one feel rotten all over. Just now there is an abscess at the root of a molar which may require to be pulled out. It will not be very pleasant to have that done in my present position. A dentist has to be called from outside, and this town of one hundred thousand has only one to take care of its three million and two hundred thousand teeth (this calculation is somewhat inexact, considering that there are babies and old folk). Well, even if the number was half, it will be too much for one man. So, the prisoner must wait for his turn, which naturally must be after the more fortunate. But it will come after all. And my pains will be relieved at the cost of some more, I believe.

What a lot of precious space is wasted in describing the aches and pains experienced by a crawling bit of impure carbo-hydrate. Enough for once.

Since my health has been fairly well, I have been working at the holy wheel. I like it, and have become an expert hand. Daily I do the whole prescribed task—as much as

any ordinary prisoner can do—in much less time allotted for the purpose. I have always tried to do anything as well as anybody. With this new accomplishment, I may be confident of being admitted into the inner conclave of the Mahatma. For, the members of the highest ruling body of the Congress—the Mahatma's conclave of cardinals—are chosen not by any other merit than the ability to ply the prayer wheel. Why the devoted souls with their prophet do not go to the land of Dalai Lama, I wonder? But it seems their days are numbered; of course, in an old country like ours, days may be counted in terms of the years of other mortal lands. Yet, they are numbered.

I am also numbering my days. In another two weeks, I shall have done twenty months of my six years. If nothing more favourable happens, there will be no more than three years left. In between, rays of hope may be reasonably discerned. And these three years, granted it will be no less, I do not propose to spend only in spinning and tooth-ache. Unfortunately, there are many difficulties about my doing the desired literary work as planned. But I am keeping at it as best as possible.

I am just now working on a survey of the various schools of modern philosophy, to show that essentially they are all "spiritualist". This is necessary to knock off the prejudice which hangs heavily on the nationalist ideology, even of the better type. You know the shibboleth: Eastern Spiritualism versus Western Materialism. That is all tommy-rot. To prove that, I wish to have the new books by Bergson as well as some other latest philosophical publications. For example, I should like to have all the works of Bertrand Russell and Whitehead. I would also like to have *Moral Man and Immoral Society* by Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Meaning and Truth of Religion* by

Eugene Lyman, *The Scientific Basis of Evolution* by Thomas Hunt Morgan, also the latest works of Jeans, Eddington and others belonging to their school.

The end of the paper already shines before me like the sharp edge of a cruel knife, and I want to write so many things more. I am glad to know that so many of your old friends are flocking to Paris in addition to our mutual ones. Paris has always been my pet abomination. But now I am beginning to like it. It is strange that you found the quiet corner near Trocadero. I used to live around there—near the Ecole Militaire. Tell Heinz and August that I am very very sorry not to be able to be with them in these times of trouble. My position remains as determined as ever, although there is more than enough reason to shake it, if I were . . . oh well, no humbug. Now I must stop for a month.

*Central Prison, Bareilly,
October 12, 1933.*

AS I wrote last month, I am getting on fairly. Now that the hot weather is over, I expect to be better. I don't believe that there is anything really wrong with my chest, except the heart trouble which has been quiescent lately. Except being generally run down, which is natural in my present condition, I am alright. Lately, I have had only some trouble with the teeth. Finally, to my reluctance, a big molar had to be extracted. (Passages struck out) The trouble was in the gum, which could be cured by prolonged special treatment, not available in my present condition. So, I thought it was wise to get rid of the perennial pain at the cost of a tooth. I have heard that Parisian dentists are abominable, just as Parisian weather is in summer. I had the experience of one, and the winter may not be any

better. It rains snow usually. How is the Quartier Latin apartment? I hope it will be properly heated in the winter, which is not the case with all Parisian houses, particularly on the intellectual "Left Side" (of the river Seine). But this winter, France may have a surfeit of coal, for the old drama of Ruhr occupation may be re-enacted. The Hitlerites seem to be doing their level best to provoke it, although it is hard to imagine what the devil they would gain by such foolish escapades.

I can quite imagine the uncertainty of the situation, and your responsibility. With so many of people hanging around precariously, one's income can never be enough, particularly when circumstances have reduced it much lower than the deserving level. Heinz's note was pathetic. The old chap sounds somewhat depressed, although he tried to put up a brave face, I suppose in consideration of my own position. But I wish them to understand that I consider mine to be in no way worse than theirs—indeed, much better than that of those caught in the Dritte Reich. Oh yes, I know Dimitrov very well. When he escaped with his life from the Tsankov terror in his native Bulgaria, he looked like a bandit with his bushy hair and beard. In joke, he was called the bandit, and the name stuck, even in the days when he became a well-dressed figure on the Unter den Linden (main street in the diplomatic quarter of Berlin) as a trusted lieutenant of. . .

As regards my condition of life, there is nothing generally to complain. It is alright, as far as conditions in jail go. No, unfortunately, I am not alone. There is a companion. The room is big size, and could easily accommodate two or even more prisoners; but the sort of people—that makes a world of difference. You know what an unsociable boor I am. Even chosen

company bores me to death. Promiscuous association is my abomination. Unfortunately, my present companion happens to embody everything just contrary to my habits, taste, education etc. But what can you do? The country is full of such people, and some of them cannot be kept out of the way. He being a prisoner of the same class as myself, I have no right to kick, though there are plenty of reasons. I cannot resist the temptation of mentioning something very amusing. As a typical son of Mother India, he, of course, is firmly convinced that the materialist Western civilization is inferior to the spiritual culture of India. But it so happens that he never saw a European from close quarters before he was tried by an English judge. Let alone even the most elementary knowledge of European history, he is ignorant of the geographical position of the principal European countries. Of course, he knows nothing of the civilization he so heartily detests. He only firmly believes himself to be a proud product of a spiritual civilization, which is supposed to disregard the material things of life. So, can you imagine my inclination for a hearty laugh when I see him daily, often more than once, quarrelling with poor prisoners for a few grains of sugar or similar trivialities? Another notion he has about Western civilization is that all European women are bad—morally. This also greatly amuses me. For, he is so sublimely primitive that it does not occur to him that his opinion may not please those who like myself have had the good fortune of knowing the very best of woman-kind,—in the accursed West. But what can you do? There are millions and millions of such type in this sacred land! You wanted me to show you what is to be changed? Here you have the picture in advance. Really, the chap is harmless, after all. He simply cannot be anything but him-

self,—the product of a decayed civilization, awaiting a much delayed burial. This country needs a Kemal Pasha, to begin with, to chop off the ridiculous tufts on the heads; to make the wearing of fierce moustaches punishable as culpable homicide; to drive the pampered, idle, gossiping, but outrageously maltreated women out in the streets to work down their fat or cure their anaemia, and to free themselves from the malignant curse of suppressed passion; to prohibit the irritating chanting of rigmarole in a language which few understand; and to do many other similar things.

So much for my honoured companion. As regards the rest, I have a daily bath—in the hot months as many as three times a day; otherwise, I would decompose. I sleep near a big window, through which I can look at the sky over the high walls. Just now the sky is beautiful. You have never seen such deep blue, and stars—billions and billions of them, neither Jeans nor Eddington will ever count, although they might calculate them theoretically. This is the nicest time of the year in these parts. Here, autumn is entirely different from that in Europe. It is just like spring there. October and November and March and April are very pleasant. December to February will be cold, enough to heat the room; in the absence of that amenity (not only in jail, but practically in all the houses outside), it gets quite disagreeable sometimes. I am talking weather—just think of it!

Lack of necessary literature is not the main obstacle to my accomplishing the planned books. The main difficulty is the restrictions involved in my present life. They make systematic work impossible. I have a mass of materials gathered during the first year; but I am not in a position to work them up in the final shape. Nevertheless, I am

doing in scraps. Just now I am nearly finishing an exposé of the modern schools of Western philosophy including epistemological conclusions of the recent scientific theories. This is to serve as the introduction to the book on the *Outline of the History of Scientific Thought* (to call Materialism with a less shocking name). What was meant to be introduction for a book has itself swollen into a small-size book. So much the better. Once begun, the work had to be thoroughly done. Therefore, I wish to have some of the latest scientific publications (Morgan, Planck, De Sitter, Jeans, Eddington, Soddy, Haldane, Huxley, etc.). It is not necessary to send such a lot of magazines. The business ones particularly might be left out. I shall be well content with the *Time*, the *Current History*, the *Nation* and some serious scientific periodicals. I don't care for the pseudo-high-brow trash like the *American Mercury* or the *Atlantic Monthly*.

Central Prison, Bareilly,

December 23, 1933.

PLEASE communicate the following to Sir Stafford. I have given careful consideration to the point raised by him, and fully appreciate its gravity. Having done so, I feel that there will be no particular harm, whatever may be the verdict of the Privy Council. As far as India is concerned, the situation will be hardly affected by an adverse decision, whereas a favourable verdict may be advantageous. The extension of the possible evil to Britain is a very remote possibility,—too remote to counter-balance the immediate advantage of a favourable verdict. The precedence of the Meerut case is not quite relevant in view of the practical uselessness of an appeal to the Privy Council. On that occasion, the appeal was to be exclusively on

principle—for establishing a possibly favourable legal precedence. Therefore, the decision to appeal or not had to be determined exclusively on the point raised by Sir Stafford. For these reasons, I am in favour of proceeding with the appeal. But there is one condition. The gravity of the point raised by Cripps had to be measured by the legal merit of the case. On this point, the lawyer is the best judge. If from the merit of the case it appears to Sir Stafford and other competent legal authorities that there is a fair chance of a favourable verdict, then the risk taken becomes almost negligible. So, while giving my answer to the question put to me, I, in my turn, request Sir Stafford to be guided by the merit of the case. Personally, I think that on the merit of the case the Privy Council is not likely to uphold the judgment of the Indian court. But I may be mistaken or optimistic. That is for the lawyer to judge.

Now I turn to our mouton, as the French say, I mean, our monthly long distance talk. I was extremely glad to have the lines from Sneevliet, and particularly so about his "confession". Bless his soul, if he has any! I wish I could write to him directly. I appreciate his warm feelings very highly. I am sure he will play his lone hand in the Parliament. He is a splendid speaker. If he only could be cured of the canker of leftism, he would be a great asset. There would be none to rival him in his little country and its vast empire. I was optimistic when he invited me to speak to his people in 1930. But unfortunately, owing to his previous connection with Ruth, Maslow and company, our people were very much prejudiced against him. My optimism about him was laughed at. Yet, I still think that, had our people been more elastic in the attitude towards him, we could have won him over, and that would

mean, win over whatever is worth the trouble in his country. Well, there is no use crying over spilt milk. They are determined to try their luck. Let them go ahead—to burn their fingers, or stultify themselves. Nevertheless, he remains a great friend, as you must have noticed. Why don't you go to his place for a rest. I am sure, he and his wife would be delighted to have you for a visit, and she would stuff you with good Dutch grub. It is splendid, you know! In my opinion, the best in the world, being a combination of French fineness and German solidity.

Although I have not asked for the permission, I presume that my literary productions will not be going out of jail before myself. In any case, no useful purpose will be served by sending them abroad. They are mostly written for home consumption. The exception is the work on Indian philosophy. But that is still in a rather formative stage. The progress is hindered by the want of sufficient material. I am afraid, it will not be finished before some time even after I am out. Meanwhile, I have written some fragmentary things on particular points. I have not done anything about translating Feuerbach. The thing on Western philosophy is nearly complete. I have named it *Spiritualism of the Western Civilisation*. It is divided into three parts: Christian and Mediaeval Thought; Modern Philosophy; and the Conclusion of the survey in support of the thesis that the Western civilisation is not "materialist." Although its size (about 600 pages manuscript) precludes its being an introduction to the *Outline of the History of Scientific Thought*, it cannot be of great use as an independent treatise. It shall have to be somehow related to another work. I am not yet sure how that will be done. Some progress has been made also on the *Outline*. But it

is held up by the lack of latest scientific works which I am expecting. All of these things will have to be given the finishing touch after my release.

For two or three months, I felt quite picked up. Lately, I have been somewhat pulled down again. It may be due to the cold weather. I have been losing weight again. (Passages struck out) Yet, the fact remains that I did get used to a rather high standard of living which makes the present conditions particularly hard. But it is silly to complain. One must play the game according to rules, and I mean to be a good sportsman.

Central Prison, Bareilly,

January 25, 1934.

I SHOULD not delay this month's letter any longer, because the news of the recent earthquake in this country would be making you anxious. It has caused havoc in the province east of this. Some shocks were felt here also, though there was no damage. The full extent of the loss of life and property in the province affected by the catastrophe is not yet known. But it must have been tremendous. Five large towns have been nearly ruined. The centre of the eruption seems to be under the Himalayas. That is the abode of our gods, particularly of Siva—the God of Destruction. The gods must have been annoyed by the impudence of men who have been lately prying into their secrets with the help of the infernal flying machine of their creation. Flying over Kailash (the home of Siva !)—just think of the audacity of mortal man ! So, the punishment has come. Such an interpretation would acquire credence in view of the fact that the place, which served as the base of operation during the last flight over the Himalayas, has suffered the most. But the joke of it is

that the real sinners are not affected by the wrath of the gods. The devout believers are the victims.

Anyhow, nature is behaving queerly. It has been an extremely severe winter. We have had nearly two months of cold weather, including many frosty nights and several days of rain-storm, to boot. Yet, the end does not seem to be in sight. It is reported that the cold has been severe in Europe also. But snow should be preferable to the usual nasty wet winter of Paris, provided that the houses are heated.

I was kindly informed that a New Year's cable had come from you. (A sentence struck out). You should not waste money on such things now. There is plenty of better use for money. Just think how people would like to borrow it from you. Has Heinz returned from his trip? I wished to write so many things to him, but that simply cannot be done. Only, I wish him and others to understand that I have not been such a fool as it may appear. There are weighty reasons for satisfaction. It may not be long before things will appear in a clear perspective. They are bound to, and are shaping that way, slowly but surely.

The second year of my imprisonment was completed on the ninth of this month. There are four years left. Some of it—at least a year—can be reasonably expected to be knocked off ordinarily. That means, at the very worst, there are three years more. They should pass quickly, even if I were to go through the ordeal without any mitigation. But I am hopeful of a favourable result of the Privy Council appeal. Therefore, I could persuade myself to take the responsibility of instructing to go ahead with it. I hope there will be no more delay. I am naturally eager to see the end of my present position. The behaviour of the lawyers at this end is really exasperat-

ing. The case has been bungled from the very beginning. (Passage struck out) Paton, Brockway (if he is back) or Cripps himself, if necessary, could get in touch with Nehru in this connection. This round-about way has to be taken, because I cannot write directly to people who would take personal interest, unless I forego writing to you, which I do not want. (Passages struck out) I am allowed to buy some ordinary daily necessities, such as soap etc.

The books from Sneevliet have not come as yet. I suppose you told him what sort of books I wish to have. Please, write to him that I would like to have the latest two books of G.D.H. Cole (the Guide Through the World Chaos, and Intelligent Man's View of Europe). I wish to have some light reading also.

Owing to the severe cold, I have not done any writing for two months. In the evenings, bed is the only tolerable place, and even that not always. Some nights have been so cold that it never got warm—I mean, the bed. Then, lately, I have been feeling very much run down again to do any strenuous work. Just now, I am not doing my spinning either. Have been exempted on medical grounds. But I hope to feel better soon again, and life will run its natural course. It is, however, a nuisance to be unable to stand heat as well as cold. I suppose I am getting old. My iron constitution is getting rusty. But I don't wish to be old so soon—for more than one reason! If two years of jail should bring me in the sight of old—at any rate, middleage, I would be a dottard after another three years. I don't like that perspective at all. I wish to live many years yet, and be kicking. If the will to be young can have any influence over one's physical being, why? then I mean to be out in the world yet a young man. But the sad fact is that I am actually forty.

I read in the magazine that a book called *Life Begins at Forty* is making a sensation in America, and that is for women! So, the limit for men must be placed at least at fifty. Thus, I can afford to squander another dozen years still before reaching the point of re-birth. This new theory of life knocks off my old desire to kick off the bucket at forty, which I thought was the door to old age. This funny notion was in contradiction to my being; yet it lingered. I suppose I was subconsciously influenced by my horoscope, according to which I should not live more than forty years! Now, there is an indiscretion on my part,—to write all this foolish stuff! In the present difficult situation of yours, one is likely to be alarmed and upset by the least misgiving. I do hope you will not take this with any seriousness! I am only joking. To do so transports me, in imagination, to those glorious days when we did nothing but laugh. The desire to laugh like that again is too strong to let me get so old as to make one feel ashamed to act like that. Thus, I mean to survive my horoscope,—to make the evil planets jump on their orbits as erratically as their prototypes in the microsm do. For this reason, I am prepared to prefer the Theory of Uncertainty (although this metaphysical deviation of physics has been corrected by the latest discovery of Born) to relativity, with all respect for Einstein and his precious violin.

This makes me remember the latest scientific work which I need to complete the book on scientific thought. Urge the Americans about this, and Sneevliet. Otherwise, I must order them directly from here, as soon as I recover some of the money advanced to the lawyer who did not do his job. What about our books in Berlin? Did you make any effort to have the American Consul make the

Hitlerites disgorge them? By the way, I was pleasantly surprised to read that the Bandit and his associates had such good luck. The London show did its work. Something to be cheerful about. But the poor Dutchman—the unhappy scape-goat of the whole incredible tragedy. I wonder how it feels to have one's head chopped off, although I know how it feels to see it done. I had the pleasure in China.¹

Now I must crawl under my blankets and make an unsuccessful attempt to keep my freezing feet warm for ten hours—until the sun sends down his kind rays in the morning.

Central Prison, Bareilly,
February 24, 1934.

It was a great relief to receive at last your January letter. In spite of everything, I am in a fixed position—safe and secure. But you are being tossed on the stormy sea of a world thrown out of its hinges. And things appear to be getting worse. The delay in receiving your letter caused me all the more uneasiness because, according to the little news available to me, Paris lately has been the scene of rather stormy events, which might pre-
sage anything in that centre of Latin effervescence. On the other hand, the unduly famous “Millimeternich”², the lionized pet of the Great Powers—is also having his innings. By God! What next? There is an Indian adage, very apposite to the comic situation,—“Elephants and horses are drowned, now comes the donkey to sound the depth of the stream.” Anyhow, I almost feel inclined to

¹ The reference is to the Reichstag Fire trial in Berlin.

² The Chancellor of Austria, Dollfuss, was given that nickname, because of his short stature.

advise you to turn a Zionist and peregrinate to Palestine. Only, even there, there is no peace. Seriously, don't let the empty charm of geographical nearness turn you to any such adventure. The best place for you, after all, is where you are. Good friends more than compensate for all the disadvantages, actual as well as potential.

About the appeal, of course, there is nothing more to do than to wait with patience, and pessimism. If we do that, we shall not be disappointed. Whatever may be the result of the appeal, there will be another chance of my release a year hence. The cases of long-term prisoners, under certain conditions, are placed for consideration by a Board of Revision, upon the expiry of half the sentence. On the recommendation of the Board, any prisoner may be released. In case of an adverse judgment of the Privy Council, steps should be taken in England for my release by the Revision Board. The case for my premature release by an executive order can be made on several grounds, the most pertinent, relevant and legally sound being the light sentences given in the Meerut case. Ask the friends in England to explore the possibilities that way, and move proper authorities well ahead of time.

Spring is really glorious in Paris, provided that conditions of a different kind should not mar the glory of nature; and at present, there does not seem to be any guarantee for that provision. One can hardly appreciate the beauty of the Champs Elysees, if it is turned into Champs de Mars, swarmed with the "unwashed multitude" with no bread, and not even a clever Queen to suggest their eating cake instead.

I am told that a fountain pen has been received for me. It must be the one from the Dutchman! Bless his soul, notwithstanding all his sins! Some books also have

come. Probably they are also from the Dutchman. Otherwise, they must be from someone in America. It is really a mystery what happened to the package from Jay. I just read some good reviews of the latest books of Plivier, and another by an Austrian called "Radetzky March". Could you get them for me?

I am really homesick, and am eagerly looking out for the day when we shall celebrate a grand reunion, which, let us pray, will be all-inclusive.¹ Keep singing "Wir reissen. . . .," if that helps. As far as I am personally concerned, there should be no objection to going more than half way from our side—as an emergency measure. Otherwise, it may be too late to "repair the ruins." The only condition is that we keep intact the instrument indispensable for the repair—the "kritische Kopf."

Central Prison, Bareilly,
March 22, 1934.

YOUR letter asking for an urgent reply to Sir Stafford's questions could be available to me a full month after the date on which it had been written. It is a hopeless mess,—all due to the astonishing lack of sense of professional responsibility on the part of the lawyers on this end. I am really desperate, and doubtful if, with all the anxiety on the part of the friends on the other end, the appeal will ever materialize. I am afraid it will go by default. I hate to be so pessimistic. I shall no more worry

¹ I was earnestly hoping that the triumphal march of Fascism, practically throughout Europe, would be an inducement for the Communists and Socialists to close up their ranks, so that a powerful resistance could be put up against the menace. The song referred to is the "Red Pilot's Song."

about the appeal, since nothing more could be done by me. We have not been counting very much on the result, anyhow. Let the friends in England try other means to secure my early release. In the worst case, there remain another three years, may be even less. (Several lines struck out).

The books (ten) sent by you came. I am very glad to get a supply of light literature. I have had none for a long time, except magazines. I get quite a large supply of magazines,—good ones. So, I have not been inconvenienced in the least.

I cannot let you have my opinion of the French books as yet. It will be still some time before I shall have them. They must be sent up for censorship. Being novels, they will, of course, get passed; but even that takes time. Meanwhile, I am reading *Ann Vickers* (by Sinclair Lewis). I have been eager to have it ever since I read about its publication. I am not disappointed. It is a classic. I have already read a number of reviews of the book, which were all more or less favourable. But I find the book to be better than its best reviewer found it to be. The author has grown immensely since *Babbit* won him recognition as a great writer. Supercilious critics of the Mencken type, still clinging to the obsolete notion of art for art's sake, may find the book deficient in pure artistic merit. But this is the kind of book which cannot be measured by old standards. It is a new landmark in the development of art. The book has an amazingly wide sweep. Did Viertel contemplate putting it on the screen? I am afraid, even he would not be able to do justice to it. The finesse of the book cannot be brought out by the camera. The author's critical eye has been focussed on small details, and the lurid picture of the modern American society is

revealed through these chinks. So thorough is the treatment that even our "linien-treue" (official Communist) heroes also have come in for a well deserved lashing. There is a bit of splendid parody of their antics.

The pen from Jack Horner came. I am writing with it. It is grand. I am sure the books will also arrive one of these days. The Dutchmen are solid—like their cheese. I wish he would send me one of those fascinating red balls with golden interior and piquant taste. Only, it won't reach my watering mouth, even if he did send it.

It is getting more than warm here. Spring is not known in this blessed country. Summer breaks in like a thunder. It is better so. To be enjoyed, spring must not come alone. I am getting hungry for some beauty of life—a comfortable hotel on pine-covered mountains, ravenous appetite at a well-laid table, and a lot of laughter. It may be a sacrilegious idea of beauty. But utterly disregarding the remonstrances of the high-brow aesthetes, I am going to have my way.

Central Prison, Bareilly,

April 21, 1934.

YOUR March letter also had to wait a week. (Passages struck out) I am glad to know that you are in touch with Bombay. My difficulty is that I could not communicate with others than the lawyers without forfeiting the right of writing to you, once a month. Consequently, I had to depend entirely on the lawyers. The Bombay people will do whatever can be done. If their efforts to get a new set of papers do not succeed, well, then there is nothing more to be done.

There is no definite news about my transfer as yet. I was told it would be for the summer. The summer

begins officially on April 15. That is the date for the Government to go up to the hills. Although officially still young, actually the summer has been in full bloom for quite a while. In fact, this year it has come rather early for this place. Just now it is very hot, and mosquitoes, to boot; and how! Fortunately, I am permitted the use of a net. That's a blessing. Yet, one must suffer from the beasts several hours in the evening. One cannot sit inside a net as soon as the sun goes down. Even in the day, they don't let you alone, unless you happen to be directly in a draught.

I am glad to know that your flat has become habitable, though rather late. Rather late than never! According to a Bengali saying, a blind uncle is better than no uncle! It is a happy news that you have such pleasant neighbours. Once I lived more than a year in the same house with Willy. He was a great man then—at the height of his glory; almost a rival of Hugenberg or Rothermere. In the earlier part of our residence together under the same roof, I happened to be his political boss. He behaved fairly well; and Babette? She could never get over the Potsdam tradition of her childhood. Stiff—she made me feel uncomfortable; but extremely efficient. Little Willy had habits, you know. However, if they entertain you once in a while, I should be thankful. By the way, what happened to Heinz Neumann? Not that I am particularly anxious to know about the wretch.

Yes, you should see Jacques (Doriot). You should have done before. You shall find him extremely nice, personally, and he is clever. We were great friends; just like the Dutchman. Only, you cannot expect the Parisian to be so sentimental as the Dutchman! My differences with the latter were much greater than with the former.

In fact, Jacques differed very little from us. It was all a matter of what would be the best way to do things. Who is the fat French Mayor you refer to. The Strasburg chap? For a time, I thought it was Cellier. Give my heartiest greetings to Jacques, and tell him that I often think of him—in many connections, the Cabaret at Hankow, for example.

The batch of novels from you came some time ago. I finished half of them. The French ones had to be censored by officials knowing the language. They have just come back. I shall soon be able to read them. There is a new Van Dine book—the *Dragon Murder Case*. But really you need not bother too much about it, specially when I shall have a fine collection of German novels. I don't know from whom the books received by Sanyal came. I have not got them yet. It is annoying. I think they are from America and must be scientific works. I am so very anxiously waiting for them. Some time ago, I asked you to send me the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*. I would like to have it very much. Besides, there are two new American magazines which I would like to have: *The Modern Thinker* and *The Modern Monthly*.

I am sorry that I am not in a position to supply August with any scientific material about the earthquake. The newspaper I get carried little in that line. All I know is that a hasty geological survey was made to ascertain if there was any ground for the general fear that there would be more shocks in the near future. The report is reassuring. It seems that there was no volcanic eruption. The cause appears to be the cooling down of a deep-seated crust of the earth. Probably, significant dislocations have taken place in the Himalayan range. Out in the plane, local depressions are noticeable. Large areas have

been buried under sand, several feet deep. Thus, there will be some change in the agricultural position of the province. These bits of random information have little value as data for constructing any scientific hypothesis. I suppose, before long there will be a more or less thorough geological survey. The report of that survey may provide the necessary data.

If August were not so occupied with more immediate problems, I would request him to give me some points on Heysenbergs's Theory of Uncertainty and Bohr's Doctrine of Free Will, based thereupon. I have been writing something on those matters. As far as I can see, the latest discoveries in the field of electronic mechanism have cut the ground under the tendencious Theory of Uncertainty. The formula of the Goettingen Professor (what's his name?) seems to have dispelled the impression that the Quantum Theory upsets the mechanical view. I badly need some books on these points as well as on the latest biological theories. Haldane's *volte face* is amazing; and Lloyd Morgan's self-contradiction is pathetic, so is the teleological atavism of Thomas Hunt Morgan. I have got entangled in these things, in order to refute the foolish Indian notion that Western philosophy of the orthodox schools is materialist.

I am fully in agreement with the projected move at the time of the coming general meeting.¹ I suggest that the question of emergency be emphasised. I am too much of

¹ The Opposition Communists, in an international conference, resolved to address a letter to the coming Seventh World Congress of the Communist International asking for the permission to attend it, so that points of difference might be discussed and a re-union of all the Communist forces might take place.

a realist to be carried away by my desire. I fully see the difficulties ahead, and am not unduly optimistic. Yet, we must make our position clear, and that is sure to have its effect. Regarding my special sphere of influence, I have reason to be optimistic. I expect that there we shall have the monopoly, and that might be instrumental in re-establishing the general balance.

District Jail, Almorah,

May 17, 1934.

I WISH to inform you of my transfer. Here the letter must be posted two days earlier to catch the next air mail at Delhi. I wonder if you will be able to locate my new home on the map. It is more than 150 miles from the old place—up on the foot-hills of the Himalayas, eighty miles from the railhead. This place, a small town, is something like 6,000 feet above sea level, and has a dry bracing climate. I came, rather was brought, here on the 5th. Naturally, I enjoyed the journey, my first outing after a whole year. (A large portion of the letter describing the conditions under which I was transferred struck out. The objection was to my mentioning the fact that I was put in fetters on the trip.)

You will naturally want me to tell something about the new place. I must disappoint you. I have not seen anything of it. The eighty miles motor road, however, was beautiful, although the foot-hills are mostly barren. I am rather disappointed. I was eagerly expecting to be in a place, from where I could see big sleeping animals all around.¹ From here, in jail, the view unfortunately is

¹ From the small hotel in the Tyrolian hill station where I spent some time on the eve of my departure from Europe, the mountains all around used to look like big sleeping animals.

circumscribed by ugly high walls. I must imagine that I am in such a high place. Anyhow, I am quite comfortable, living in a big barrack (there are no rooms in jail, only barracks or cells) with a new companion. This is a very small jail; yet there is a fairly large compound at our disposal. The greatest blessing is the escape from the fierce heat of the plains. It was already getting intolerable by the end of April. Here it is only pleasantly warm. The air is dry, and the water is very very soft, which I hate. You can never wash away the soapy feeling. It is too early to say what effect the change will have on my health. But I expect to feel better. In these conditions, all that one can hope is to stave off the worst. I am sure this place will contribute to the realization of the modest hope.

I do not know how long I shall be kept here. It gets very cold in winter. Of course, I don't mind that, having lived at forty degrees (centigrade) below zero. But a prisoner has no choice. A prisoner is a thing. He does not stay in one place or another. He is kept. (Passages struck out).

I have resumed work on my books. Before any transfer, I had to suspend it for several months owing to the state of my health. Had I been kept at the old place, the heat would have held up the work another four or five months. The first book—to dispel the legend of "Western Materialism"—may be finished very soon. It is already two thirds done. It will be an exposé of the various schools of modern philosophy on the background of a broad outline of the mediaeval and antique thought. The introduction to the projected, and partially done, book on Materialism has swollen to the proportion of a separate book. That is the first one to be completed. The third and the

main work, on Indian philosophy, still remains in the embryonic state. But should I have to serve out my whole term, that would also be done, I hope. In any case, an exposition of the point of view from which the vast, mostly unexplored, field will be investigated, and of the method to be employed in that investigation, is the preliminary necessity. Half of the projected work will be done, if I can accomplish this preliminary task. Friends abroad would prefer my doing the work on Indian philosophy first. But the requirements of the situation in this country have persuaded me to reverse the order of my projected work. It is not enough for me to have a correct view of the past as a guide for the future. Others must share it. For that purpose, it is necessary that the method for acquiring that view is made available to those who are objectively moving in the direction; and the acceptance of the method is conditional upon a certain amount of spade work which may appear superfluous to friends abroad. But what is commonplace to them may be a *terra incognita* for others. And these babes in the wood are my special charge.

I am very eager to know how our move in anticipation of the ensuing meeting of the Board of Directors (The Seventh World Congress of the Communist International) is developing. I am all in favour of it, and fervently hope that it will produce that desired effect. Only I wish I could contribute something concrete. I presume that might have been rather effective. Unfortunately, nothing can be done. So, I can only offer my moral support. Who will be coming from America? It must be Jay (Lovestone).

As I wish to put in some solid work while here, some books are urgently required. In addition to my list, August

might suggest some latest works on philosophy suitable for my purpose.

I have not yet had time to read the French books. By the way, did you read the book by Jules Romain which is making such a sensation? I don't want it. Just now I am too occupied with other things to enjoy experimental *roman* (novel). But I can always find time for good detective stories, and shall be very pleased to have the books by the emigré authors.¹ I highly appreciate their warm feelings for me. Give them all my heartiest greetings. It would be a great fun to sit together gossiping on those uncomfortable chairs of the boulevard cafés.

District Jail, Almorah,

June 19, 1934.

THIS month your letter came very quickly. It bore the Paris post mark of the 6th and reached me here on the 15th. This breaks all previous records. But your last month's letter reached just a day or two after I had posted mine. It had gone astray on the way from Bareilly to here—had a look over the country. Of all places, it went to old Cownpore! These places will haunt us all our life!

It is very unfortunate about the papers. The gods seem to have been pleased to put a spoke in the wheel of my

¹ A collection of modern German novels by exiled writers, presented by themselves, was later on sent to me, but I was not allowed to have them. They were sent back all the way to Paris at my cost. The collection contained also several books on the Nazi regime in Germany, such as the Brown Book on Hitler Terror and the White Book about the Persecution of Jews in Germany published by the League of Nations. I was not allowed to have any one of these books.

case. I am not surprised. I am used to these queer happenings, although such things seldom happen—papers of a law case getting lost in transmission through post. Like a hard-boiled lawyer, Cripps expressed himself very cautiously in his letter. I don't think it is necessary to be so pessimistic. Therefore, write to Brockway in my name that Cripps should be pressed to take some practical steps without any further delay. He will get the papers in due course. Another set is being sent. Meanwhile, he should draw upon his professional ingenuity. Otherwise, he is not worth his mediaeval wig.

The appeal itself being problematical, other means should be tried. I already indicated the line. I was sorry to read about Brockway's debacle in a by-election. But there is Maxton to raise the matter in the Parliament. In view of the light sentence in the Meerut case, there is no earthly ground on which I could be kept longer than three years. It is already long enough. I am getting tired.

You will be surprised to know that I have been suspected of being neurotic. I—neurotic! What do you think of that? In case I have had such a fall since we parted, you will be qualified to treat me on the strength of your Freudian training acquired in the meantime. Are you really so scornful about this scientific abortion? Father-Horse, is after all not the highest formula of Freudian mathematics. Of course, it is absurd to debase psychology to the common denominator of sex. But there are some good points in the treatment of the subject. Besides, why blame only the poor Freudians? Is it not a fact that psychology is the most absurd science? More than ninety per cent of the people who wisely talk on the subject talk nonsense.

I am glad to hear about Jacques. I could write him a

lot, and it might be effective, too. I always had faith in him. He is one of the very few people who measured up to my standard. Why don't you simply go and see him? Tell him to be decisive. One must have the courage to swim against the current occasionally. He has patiently and hopefully tried all possible means. Now the die must be cast. Have we, he and me, not seen enough to be convinced that there is a stone-wall to be battered down? It may be necessary for some to break their poor necks in this exploit. But then the way will be open for others. Why should we be so particular about our precious necks? It does not make much difference how it is broken. A noose would serve the purpose just the same, and it is dangling before him if he does not bolt.

For a month after my arrival here, I felt quite well, and put in a large amount of work. For some days, I have been rather out of sorts again. Hope it will pass away. In any case, it is a blessing to be out of the heat. The climate is really nice here. Indeed, I have been making plans of passing some time somewhere here after my release. It is rather dreaming than planning. My present mood makes me more homesick for Europe—the civilised life and old friends there. But won't it be silly to have come back only to spend several years in jail?

Do you often hear from the Dutchman? No books have come from him as yet. It is rather strange; because I don't expect him to neglect. I suppose he is all taken up by his foolish enthusiasm over the organisation of the new firm of the Lion and Co.¹ But you write that it is already bursted. I am very anxious about what will happen in the forthcoming seventh anniversary, particularly how our gift will be treated. Of course, previous experience

¹ The Fourth International, started by Trotzky.

does not permit any optimism. Yet, it is hard to believe that things will continue much longer in this deplorable state. Sometimes I really feel depressed. Don't the people at the top see the danger? Are they really so foolish as their talk sounds? It is really incredible. I am very glad to know that our people are so tenaciously standing the difficult position, and are actually making headway.

Did Jay come to the Easter Festival? (The international conference of the Opposition Communists held during the Easter holidays) How are the Swedes? Have they gone totally to the dogs? And what sort of dogs?

As regards Heysenbergs Theory of Uncertainty, what I wanted to know is not about itself, but what is its present position in the light of the latest discoveries of Bridgeman, Bainbridge, etc. In the book on the "Spiritualist West," I am just on the point of finishing Jeans' 'Mathematical God'; Eddington's mystic metaphysics and Bohr's Neo-Dualism naturally occupy a large place, and they are directly or indirectly all based on the Theory of Uncertainty. The explosion of this theory, which was supposed to have upset the orthodox mechanical view, will be a staggering blow to the neo-mysticism of contemporary philosophy. Therefore, I am interested to know exactly what position this theory still occupies in the scientific world. Of course, the facts about the peculiarity of electronic movement is there. The only thing to be done is to find a connecting link between this fact and the older laws of motion. It appears that has been found by Professor Born of Goettingen. I am rather sketchily informed about this theory. All I know is that he has shown that the Quantum Theory equates with the old mathematical formulas of Maxwell. This should enable Einstein to fill in the gaps in the tentative theory of the

United Field. The harmony of universal mechanism will then be re-established.

Some accurate data on all these points regarding the latest physical theories are necessary to round up my criticism of neo-mysticism. Of course, keeping in mind the intellectual level of the readers for whom I am writing, technicalities are avoided. Therefore, I want only general information. I would have liked very much to send the manuscript for August to read. But it cannot be done for more than one reason. Having been written in extremely unfavourable circumstances, the manuscript is in a rather disorganised form—partly in notes which can be transcribed in the final form only by myself. But that technical work I shall not do just now.

A propos scientific literature, I find one or two good books in the list of Albatros publications. They are cheap and easily available in Paris. Could you get them for me? They are *The Microbe Hunters* and *Man Against Death* by Paul De Kruif. Please, also send me Belloc's *Richelieu*.

District Jail, Almorah,

July 18, 1934.

A NEW misfortune has befallen me. The worst possible, and the most unexpected. I have been deprived of the facility, which was very rigidly limited, to do my literary work. According to jail regulations, B Class prisoners are automatically not entitled to these facilities. However, I have had them all along. Therefore, the blow has been very unexpected, and more severe than any other that could be implied in my present position. I am not allowed to have any blank paper, pen or even a pencil. For writing this letter, a pen has been given, and I must return it as soon as the letter is done. I am no longer in a

position to do any writing whatsoever—even making random notes of the result of reading and reflection. Even any systematic study with a scientific purpose has become impossible. Because I cannot make necessary marks in the books read, for ready reference in future, or make marginal notes. You will easily imagine how I feel in this situation. It makes the ordeal almost intolerable. I wished the people in England to make some vigorous efforts, so that my punishment is not aggravated by such absolute restrictions on intellectual life. Write to Lansbury also. Make it clear that I have been writing on scientific matters, which cannot be objectionable from the political point of view; and that my literary occupation did not interfere with my duties as a prisoner. I have all along performed the jail task allotted to me, in full—as much as done by any ordinary prisoner.

This is not a very auspicious conclusion of the third year of my ordeal. The anniversary is on the 21st. You remember, of course,—the telephone call from Heinz. But it was not altogether unexpected, perhaps somewhat earlier. It was a foregone conclusion—what might be called fate by people who think differently. The climax of the tragedy was enacted on the platform of the Verona Railway station. The blow, however, was softened by the fresh memory of the paradise lost. Turning our back on the sad past, we can now look out for the happy day when the paradise will be regained; and it will not be an anti-climax, as it was with Milton. Because, we were not driven out of the paradise. Knowing fully well that it is ours, for ever and ever, that none can drive us out of it, we voluntarily walked out, for a time. And the time will be over soon, and we shall again come to our own. This thought will carry me through any ordeal that

may yet be my share. I have a private ideal of my own to live for. While it is always before me, the turning of another year makes it shine more brightly and more encouragingly.

If I consult my personal inclination, the lure of old Europe becomes irresistible. But there are other considerations. It is more likely that you shall see India before I visit Europe again.

You will be relieved to know that I have a very pleasant summer this year. And now it is raining, raining and raining. I like it. I always liked rainy and stormy weather. But it cannot be enjoyed fully, except in suitable circumstances. Anyhow, I am not depressed by the weather, even if the sun does not shine for days. But it is never as bad as that here. The rains have brought some flowers in our (I have a companion) courtyard—red, white and salmon coloured. A dahlia plant has grown with phenomenal swiftness. When I came, it was just a few inches high, struggling out of the dry rocky soil. Today it is about eight feet, bearing gorgeously red flowers.

Did you see Doriot? I am very curious about his future. Is there any possible danger of his going too far the other way? I hope not! That would be a great pity. I wish I was there. Cannot you represent me?

No books came from the Dutchman. I am very surprised. He is not the man to neglect. With what promptness he sent the pen—now useless! The people who presented it expected it to be of some use. But others seem to think differently. I hope he is not in trouble again. The placidity of his rich little country appears to be still intact, although Belgium is having her share of the general unrest.

I am very much puzzled by the news of the recent

carnage in Germany. The news available to me are too scanty and scrappy to allow any clear judgment. Was it from the Right or the Left? (I mean, internal Left). The left wing outside is long broken—incapacitated to make any appreciable flutter, for the time being. Strasser and Roehm—that was a queer combination! I shall get the hang of the situation from the magazines in due course of time. Meanwhile, I can only speculate. The other amazing news is about "Eastern Locarno". Rolly-Polly Maxim (Litvinov) seems to be going too far—of course, under orders. Is it necessary? That is the question to be answered as the explanation; and I have not enough facts for the purpose. So, again I speculate, this time with misgivings.

I am excited about still another thing,—apparently innocuous, but of profound significance. It is directly connected with my enquiries about the present state of the theory of Heysenberg. I just read about a new book, *The Atom*, by one Dr. John Tutin, which seems to have upset the apple-cart of Indeterminacy. I don't know who is this bull in the China shop; but he is highly certified. In an introduction, Soddy endorses the contents of the book. For a whole year, I have been vaguely speculating that the internal mechanism of the atom may be somewhat different. Otherwise, on the showing of the "Copenhagen School", Determinism appeared to be in a bad plight. Of course, there was absolutely no reason for the philosophic extravagances of Eddington, Jeans, etc. Yet, there was a problem to be solved. Determinism could not stand as a dogma. Now I am startled to learn that the thesis of the new book is that Rutherford's atom—which travelled to Copenhagen for shocking interpretations—is a reversed picture of the reality. That settles it. The

problem is solved. I am excited, because I vaguely looked for the solution in the same direction. I thought there was little use in engaging in a verbal combat with the neo-mystics, so long as they stood on a plausible scientific basis, although they could easily be dislodged from that position with the help of logic. Yet, the final judgment must come from exact science. I shall be very glad to get the new book. I have written a fair amount on the point, and now with the help of Born's mathematical co-ordination of the Quantum Theory, with Maxwell's Law of Electro-Magnetism, as well as the observational result set forth in the book of Tutin, I shall be able to round up my critique of neo-mysticism. Unfortunately, just at this moment, I cannot write. Only an Einstein can carry his laboratory under the hat. That is impossible for an amateur like myself. I cannot develop my thoughts in a co-ordinated manner, unless I put them down on paper. And it gives headache to carry the load.

District Jail, Almorah,

August 23, 1934.

I GOT Brockway's letter a few days ago. I am not a bit disappointed. I never had much expectations. Moreover, Cripps seems to have had a chip on his shoulder all along. I was not at all concerned with the actual result, as it would affect me personally. I thought it was an opportunity to make a test case, and I still remain of the opinion that it should have been done. My unfortunate statement—which was never made! The issue raised therein must be fought out. I suppose, even the eminent Counsels are too much of dunderheads to grasp the point—or, perhaps, they themselves find the idea fantastic. Anyhow, I am glad that the matter is set at rest. It was

a nuisance,—to be hanging in the air all this time. Another two years—at the most! And I think, five years imprisonment is tolerable. Then, there are so many other possibilities. Write to Brockway thanking him and the others, in my behalf, for all their services. I fully appreciate their friendly interest, and am sure that they would do whatever they could to help me.

Since I wrote my last letter, the question of writing materials has been favourably decided. They will be soon restarted. Only, some time—more than two months—is lost. But there is plenty of it; and I have utilised the interval for thinking out certain philosophical problems to be handled in the books. Now I am ready to debunk this “New Epistemology”, which is supposed to result generally from the so-called “New Quantum Theory” of the Copenhagen School, and particularly from the doctrine of Indeterminacy. Apart from the mathematical formula of Born, and the experimental evidence provided by the researches in the Cavendish Laboratory and elsewhere, I am in a position to show, *philosophically*, that Heysenberg’s theory does not run counter to the basic principles of Materialism. As a matter of fact, Schroedinger’s Wave Theory of Matter, which is considered by the neo-mystics to be an elaboration of Heysenberg’s principle, is just of the contrary nature. It builds a bridge over the supposed unbridgeable rift between the classical theory of Electro-Magnetism and the Quantum Theory—a bridge, the skeleton of which was laid down by Bohr himself as early as 1913. I mean, his “Co-ordination Principle”. And now old Bohr has come out as an apostle of Free Will and Absolute Dualism! All tommy-rot! So much so that even Bertrand Russell cannot digest the doctrine, and has pointed out that it is all a matter of wrong interpretation. “In-

determinate" does not necessarily mean "undetermined". That's what he says. If he moves in this direction, there may be a split in the school of "Meta-Mathematics", which supplies the *piece de résistance* to this orgy of neo-mysticism. Whitehead is all for it.

Another problem I have concentrated upon in these weeks of forced leisure is Whitehead's "Philosophy of Organism". A pure subterfuge—it is. It reminds one very much of the famous "Emperio-Critics". To find a scientific view of nature, which would be neither Materialism nor Idealism, but superior to both! But Whitehead's "Organism" is either matter or immaterial force. With all his neo-scholasticism and Meta-Mathematics, he cannot prove it to be anything else. -

As soon as I can write again, one book will be done directly. About publication, I do not know whether it would be of much interest abroad. It is written for the Indian reader, and all the criticism is primarily concentrated upon certain basic trends of modern Indian thought. Of course, incidentally, it covers a much wider ground. Anyhow, it is not an immediate question, I mean, that of publication. I must come out first. Some preparatory arrangements for the eventual publication of the book could be done in the meantime. The book, which will be of general interest,—that on Hindu Philosophy—will have to be the last to be written. The second one will be *Outline of the Development of Scientific Thought*, which will certainly be nothing particular new for European and American readers interested in such literature. Only, the methodology may be somewhat new, and presentation of facts rather different.

I am handicapped by lack of literature. I am trying to get some directly; but the difficulty is that even the stan-

dard works are not easily available. They must be ordered from abroad. I wonder what is the matter with the Dutchman. What is he so busy about? Alone, he cannot do much in the Parliament. The Lion's "Vierte Reich" (Fourth International founded by Trotzky) does not seem to be flourishing. I understand from your last letter that something about the unity business has taken place in Holland. Has he anything to do with it? I doubt it. Jog him up about the books. Now that he is in the pay of his Queen, he should not mind a few Gulden, and one guilder buys much more than the dirty franc!

Things should not be sent to Bareilly any more. I shall not go back there. The climate of that place did not suit me. As the present arrangement is, I shall be transferred to a new place in the plains by the middle of October. The change has done me some good. I certainly feel better than I would if I had to stay another summer at Bareilly. But the root of the troubles remains still vague. The pain in the pectoral region continues. A thorough medical examination with X-ray will be very useful.

Recently, I have been reading Galsworthy's *Swan Song*—for the fifth time. It is a great book. Therein I found a very pointed sentence: "A fidelity of spirit so logical that it extended to the motions of the body, was palaeolithic, or at least Victorian and middle class." There is an idea, the disregard for which has been the cause of many painful events.

District Jail, Almorah,
September 20, 1934

A LOCAL lawyer came to see me. This is the third interview I have had since coming here. Today's visitor told me that he had been asked to communicate to me that the

papers of the case sent to you care of the American Express, Paris, came back. That is strange. What is still stranger, is that the lawyer at this end has been informed that the papers sent to Dr. Rosenfeld in Berlin could not be delivered because the addressee was in the detention camp. How polite of Goering! I did not know that Rosenfeld was in detention camp. Now he seems to be in America, as I learn from the magazines.

For the interview, I was taken to the jail gate, from where one can have a good view of the neighbourhood. It is really beautiful. But being in the midst of such beautiful mountainous country, I could see so little of it. This will be as good as any place to have the rest and comfort which I shall require on release, and to finish the work I am doing now. The weather here is fine now, and they say that it will get better in October and November. The sun is bright and pleasantly warm. And I hear that the neighbourhood is wonderful to wander about. What a fascinating perspective! It altogether overshadows the rigour of jail life.

It seems that I shall be kept here, if I don't mind the cold. I am told by those who have the experience that the winter here is not colder than at Bareilly, but pleasanter. So, I intend to stay on, unless I find the cold bad for my health. I hate being transferred from one place to another, under conditions not particularly agreeable. I think I shall feel better. I have improved appreciably during these four months here. Except for the pain around the heart, and occasional headaches, I now feel quite well.

But there is a new trouble, which is rather a bad joke than a difficulty. The difficulty is that often my sleep in the night is disturbed; the joke is the cause, which is my new companion's habit of snoring and the extraordinary

vim with which he does it. You can never imagine such a gigantic disharmony of ugly noises—grunt, groan, growl, howl, whine, whistle, hiss, etc. etc. While staying awake listening to this free entertainment, I pity the women married to fat men, and deplore the bad taste of fat men to be fat. For heaven's sake, don't have the bad taste of falling in love with a man whose bulk is out of all proportion to his inches! If you do ever have such incredible perversity, then here is my prescription: Starve the lucky devil till he dies or stops snoring! My worthy companion, however, disdainfully ignores my prescription, and my relation with him is not such as would entitle me to the protection of the divorce court. So, here I am, a martyr not to the sacred institution of matrimony, but a helpless victim of the thoughtlessness of my keepers. A prisoner cannot be particular. There are forms of imprisonment more galling and helpless than matrimony!

I am sending, as you wish, the table of contents of the book practically finished. It is not an exposé. But I think it gives a fair idea of the work. Although written particularly for the Indian reader, it has come to have a more general character. I had some latest scientific literature ordered from England through a Calcutta bookseller. So I have now practically all the material needed. The problem, however, was to translate pure mathematics into a plain human language. How on earth could you explain in a language understandable to the ordinary mortal that $pq - qp$ does not make zero? Yet, that is the whole secret of Heysenbergs's theory. Then, the difference! Well, the thing is done as best as it could be. It contains some criticism of mathematics—rather of the philosophical pretension of those pure mathematicians who maintain that the symbols do not symbolize anything except possibly

some unknowable metaphysical categories. Without censoring the extravagance of the abstractions of pure mathematics, it is not possible to lay bare the physical contents of the Theory of Indeterminacy, and show that the gap between Quantum Mechanics (as elaborated by Schroedinger and Born) and classical Mechanics is mostly imaginary—as a matter of fact, invented to provide a plausible scientific basis for the ideological needs of a decaying culture. I am afraid, it will not be possible for August to pass any judgment on these inadequate data. But he might feel inclined to make some general observations. Of course, the whole manuscript will have to be retouched before publication. So, there will be plenty of time for its examination by experts. Meanwhile, I shall also be polishing it.

As regards publication, I should prefer it to be in India, though, in that case, any financial gain will be out of question. But that is a secondary matter. Meanwhile, some efforts should be made for the publication of an English edition of the China book. The German edition is completely wiped out, I suppose. The difficulty is to find the original English manuscript. It was with all my books and papers at the Malik Verlag, and therefore must have perished in the sacred fire of Hitlerism. The Frankfurt Institute (of Social Research) had a copy. That must be also gone. If the original English manuscript is irreparably lost, then, the only solution is to translate it back from the German. But then it will not be the same thing. Because, the first three chapters dealing with theoretical questions were somewhat abbreviated in the German translation. Well, it seems to be a rather forlorn hope. In any case, if there is some chance of recovering the English manuscript, arrangements for its publication should be made. In the light of the present situation in China, and the

probability of its continuing so for some time, I can claim the distinction of a modest prophet. The German copy sent to Bareilly was not given to me; also not the Marx-Engels Archives, which I missed awfully. By Jove! I have undergone some loss owing to this madness in Germany. All the manuscripts, notes, materials etc. for my projected History of the British Empire (which was to bear the name of an immortal work) are gone. They represented four to five years' research work. I shall never be able to repair that loss.

I am very anxious for news of all the friends scattered over the world. I am very sorry to hear about the debacle of Doriot. I don't like to appear over-estimating myself; but I do feel that I could have saved him, if I was there. But it is not possible to take care of all sides. Of course, I am not optimistic about the results of the General Meeting (the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International). Yet, one cannot but be curious, and deeply concerned. Old habit? Yes. The swing to the opposite is alarming. I expressed the apprehension in the "Crisis" articles—in the one dealing with "Leadership." Please, tell Heinz, August and others that I am always with them, in spirit, and they can be sure of yet finding me a useful and effective comrade. I am full of confidence, in so far as my special zone is concerned. And our success there will tell upon the general situation. Soon I shall be away four years. I remember how distressed were old Heinz and August to hear of my plan. I hope they will all remember me in the midst of their difficult position. My heartiest greetings for all.

Central Prison, Bareilly,
October 25, 1934.

BACK again to my old "home", after just five months. Your letter from England reached me at Almorah during the last days of my stay there. I was extremely glad to learn that finally you were able to snatch a few weeks for the much needed rest. Although you could have chosen a better place, idyllic English countryside is not bad for the purpose, and it seems that you like it. Only, I hope you stayed all the six weeks out of London, and let Professor Olden alone with his Hindenburg Biography! While in London, you might have been able to show the table of contents of my book to the friends there. I am afraid, it does not give quite an adequate idea of the actual contents which cover a much wider field. But I could not do any better under the given circumstances. A fairly comprehensive exposé would require much more space, which is not available to me.

With great interest I read the remarks of August. Please, tell him that in treating the fashionable doctrine of Indeterminacy, I had in mind practically everything he has to say, and have gone once more over the manuscript to see what further improvements could be made. I believe to have made a thorough job of the subject,—I mean, it promises to be thorough when the much needed finishing touches will be added under more favourable circumstances. I hope that my heresies as regards mathematics have not shocked August too much. Since writing my last letter, I have been reading Russell, and in consequence feel the necessity of stiffening up my critique of the pompous pretensions of the so-called pure mathematics—particularly of the logical school of Russell and Whitehead. Their "neutral Monism" is sheer sophistry,

and mathematics is harnessed for this trick. This reminds me of an amusing thing: Eddington's decisive argument in favour of his mystic metaphysical interpretation of modern scientific theories. He says that a consistent Materialist should look upon his wife as a complicated differential calculus, which he cannot do for the sake of domestic peace! Just think of a great scientist arguing like this! The poor chaps are in a hopeless plight.

While still at Almorah, I had a notice from S. that he had received a number of books for me from America. There are some among them which I need urgently, namely, Planck's *Universe in the Light of Physics* and the latest works of Morgan and Haldane. But S. has not forwarded the books as yet. These people are so negligent, and I am not in a position to keep after them. Must wait patiently. I have been having a good lesson in patience in the new University of Life. I wonder if it will be helpful or harmful in future. There are moments when the philosophic calm is put to a severe test.

It was very kind of the Dutchman to place my case at the feet of his God, and one cannot but appreciate the good will of the latter.¹ It is more than what can be expected from the occupants of Olympia. But the poor chap! What can he possibly do? Besides, with all his decency as a man, he is also a God with clay feet. If he was only content to be a man, he would go down in history as a really great man—something much bigger than a God. In a new American magazine, I read some rather good stuff on the subject.

¹ My friend Sneevliet of Amsterdam, a fervent follower of Trotzky, acquainted the latter with my difficulties, and Trotzky expressed indignation at the treatment I was receiving from the Communist International.

From your last letter it appears that Willy (Muenzenberg) is in Paris. Is he back from the States? I thought he was there. I suppose he is too much of a European to relish the New World; but he is such an American businessman and should have made a hit there! I hope all our friends still continue in the happy and optimistic mood as reported in your last letter. It gives me great pleasure to think of them so. I am always with them, spiritually, and share their feelings. I wish they are conscious of this union which knows no separation.

Central Prison, Barcilly,

November 23, 1934.

YOU must have had an interesting time in London, which is a unique place. It's a class by itself. It is uncanny; but I really seem to know it like a book. All my English friends were often surprised to see that I was so well acquainted with the details and native atmosphere of a place I had never visited. Although in some respects the National Gallery is inferior to the Louvre, yet, the British Museum is a great institution.

It is really remarkable how you did meet Robeson. It does appear like a demonstration of telepathy. These great natural artists are very sensitive people. Robeson particularly is like a big unsophisticated boy. That's my impression of him. Does your experience bear it out? I do hope he will come for the concert in Paris, and you shall hear him sing in person. I once saw him act O'Neil's "Emperor Jones" in one of the fashionable West End Theatres of Berlin. I would appreciate him as a great actor, if he was not such a greater singer. If you write to him, mention this: I have seldom seen such magnificent demonstration of an actor actually living his role. I fully

agree with his views about certain features of Russian music. I always thought it a scandal that Tchaikowsky should be still played. Is there anything so silly and artificial as *La Dame Pique*? Except perhaps *Madame Butterfly*, in which a fat American Consul sings the tenor! Isn't that a ridiculous spectacle? But if Robeson wishes to follow up his plan about Oriental music, his road lies through Russia, in more than one sense—even in the strictly musical. Rimsky Korsakoff and Borodin, to some extent, have preceded him in that road to the future of a cosmopolitan music. Ask him in my behalf what he thinks of the Indian song in Rimsky Korsakoff's "*Sadko*," and of the third act of Borodin's "*Prince Igor*"? As far as I know, and can judge, those are the best specimen of what can come out of a synthesis of the two types of music. Unfortunately, Oriental music has such highly developed technique of its own, that the melody—the only thing worth preserving in it—tends to get lost in modern harmonisation. That is not the case with Negro melodies. I suppose Robeson grasps this difficulty.

I am afraid, there is some misunderstanding about my possible release by the Revision Board. Neither the friends in England nor in this country can do anything in that matter. I did not suggest any action on that line. The Revision Board is not a judicial body. It makes its recommendation exclusively on departmental grounds. My case, like others, will be considered automatically. I suggested that efforts should be made generally to secure my premature release by executive order. The Government—provincial, Indian, or the British (indirectly) can order the release of any prisoner, any time it pleases. The efforts in this sense are to be made in the usual way. I suggested certain concrete steps to be taken by Maxton.

Lansbury and Cripps may act in the same way, if they will. Nothing more can be done. Since the project of the Privy Council appeal was dropped, there is no other judicial step to be taken. Anyhow, don't worry much about the matter. If I have luck, something will happen. Otherwise, I shall have to pull through another year and half. That's not so very bad, if not a cheering perspective (A large passage struck out).

I am distressed to hear that you might have to move on again. Since you wrote, there has been a new Cabinet crisis. From the scanty news, I cannot judge the situation. But the situation appears to be such that anything may happen any time. Therefore, in my opinion, the idea of your visit to the Fatherland should be seriously considered. It would be very interesting, and you would certainly find plenty to do. I am very worried about the position of our friends too. Could they not find a better place than Ireland? What about the North? But I am not in a position to give any advice. It is too bad that the negotiations are not producing any more decisive results. I was very much encouraged by the news in your last letter. I took the postponement of the General Meeting for a good augury. It may still turn out to be so. Let us hope.

The plan I wanted you to consider is more than of a book shop. It is to found a publishing house which will grow into an intellectual centre. The object is promotion of modern scientific literature, and to encourage young intellectuals on that line. Of course, the plan necessarily includes a book shop as well. The things I am working on will not be taken up by any big publisher in this country. Nationalist publishers would not touch things which are not in the order of cheap platitudes,

the usual 'claptrap about India's world mission, spiritual genius and glorification of the past. On the other hand, books published abroad necessarily have a restricted circulation in this country. Therefore, one of the conditions for a progressive intellectual movement is some serious arrangement for the production and circulation of suitable scientific literature. Hence the necessity for a publishing house which will not be bound by purely business considerations, or nationalist prejudices and reactionary views.

To-morrow is our saddest anniversary—of the parting at Meran, four years ago. The painful memory is still so fresh, as if it was only yesterday. How many years will pass before the journey's end will be reached! Not many more, let us hope.

*Central Prison, Bareilly,
December 20, 1934.*

OUR correspondence is again in order. (Passages struck out) I read in the newspapers that, from New Year, there will be two air mails a week, and if they begin night-flying in the spring, the time interval between us may be reduced to only a week. Just think of it! It took Clive one full year to get a letter from his beloved in England, and she travelled three months to join him. You may do it in three days now! Only a morbid pessimist or a rank reactionary would deny that mankind is going ahead—in its endless march for the goal of perfection, which will and can never be reached; that the world, after all, is not a bad place—with jails, Adolf's touches of 'flu, headaches, heart-aches, and all the rest of the long list of woes!

The greatest woe for the moment is that I am not in a position to give any definite answer to the question spread all over your letter: When? If I only knew!

As a matter of fact, I am not likely to know it until the very last moment. May be, I shall find myself outside before realising that it is true.

I am surprised that Willy has become such a fatherly guardian angel to you. I also did not think that there would be any great difficulty, should you make the shift, particularly with your present business connection. I am excited at the prospect, however vague, of our friends following you there.¹ The sojourn in de Valera's Free State is such a depressing alternative. Personally, I should be extremely glad to share with you the old lady's hospitality. I am really curious how the Great Moghul would behave when we are face to face again. In short, for many reasons, I am very much tempted to pass the initial period of my freedom visiting Europe, and there is just a possibility that I may be obliged to.

Well, all this does not enlighten you much about "When?" To be guaranteed against disappointment, let us fix our gaze a year and a half hence. Meanwhile, you should look towards the friends in England for any possible concrete picture of our hope which, of course, we shall entertain. In an American journal, I just read a very sensible letter by Brockway. I wish him success.

In my last letter, I did not write anything about my work, because lately not much is being done. It has reached the finishing-up stage, where constant references are necessary, and the entire manuscript must be on hand. My present condition imposes restrictions on those fac-

¹ The Opposition Communist leaders were at that time expecting to be invited to attend the Seventh World Congress of the International at Moscow, because they had written suggesting re-union of all the Communist elements in view of the growing menace of Fascism.

lities. But I have got a fairly good collection of the latest scientific works to study up. I did not think that there was anything in the observations of the learned husband of your Viennese friend which required particular reply. I was, of course, pleased, and would welcome any further remarks he wishes to make. Indeed, I would be glad to seek the opinion of others. For example, I should certainly want Einstein to pass over what I consider to be the philosophical consequence of his theory of the "Finite but Unbounded Space". In my opinion, the theory does not "abolish infinity", as Eddington says. On the contrary, for the first time in the history of thought, the traditional concept of infinity has been given a meaning. I arrive at this conclusion not only through pure philosophical speculation, but from the analysis of the physical content of the mathematical theory. There are other such points, on which I must eventually consult the Masters—I mean, those who come as such out of the criticism of their theories.

As regards my health, there is nothing particular to write. The improvement made at Almorah could not be kept up. I have been losing weight again; the pain in the chest is sometimes rather bad. I have been shifted to the hospital—not as a patient, but to be under the personal observation of the Superintendent. I am now getting sufficient extra food. So, if the hope of early release is realised, I shall come out still in time to get back my old health.

Modern *belles lettres* must be included in the programme of the projected publishing house. That would be more effective for the purpose of disseminating new ideas. By all means, do any preliminary arrangement that can be done in that respect, namely, to secure rights of Indian editions of suitable modern novels etc. I wrote you

already once about the Malraux book. It is good. Just now I cannot give any detailed opinion. The other book, *Voyage au Bout de la Nuit* is horrid, decadent. For some time, I have read no light stuff. See if you can send me some good novels again.

It is difficult to answer your letter within the compass of one sheet. So, a lot remains unsaid, and by the time the next opportunity arises, there are new things to write. So, there remains an ever increasing reserve to be unloaded when it will be possible to be done without let or hindrance.

Central Prison, Barcilly,

January 20, 1935.

HAPPY New Year for ourselves! Don't think that I waited all these days to transmit the wish. I did it just at the moment. For that moment, I wished that telepathy had really some foundation of physical reality.

The books came; but I have not seen them as yet; nor do I know what they are. Being in German, they must go to the police for censor. I shall surely enjoy them. For a long time, I have had no light literature. Lately, I have been rather fagged out—mentally. Have not been doing much serious work, except reading some new scientific books. Would you ask August what is one to make out of Hans Reichenbach—Professor of Natural Philosophy in Berlin University? He seems to take up a curious position. Nevertheless, he has something ingenious to say. There seems to be a group of physicists and Nature-Philosophers, who very sharply criticise the mystic metaphysics of the Jeans-Eddington School, and for the purpose necessarily reject Positivism (and consequently, Berkelian Idealism), yet stop on the roadside and play the ostrich game. They

call themselves "Critical Realists", or "Physical Realists". Reichenbach seems to belong to the first group. A very brilliant representative of the second is Roy W. Sellars, Professor of Philosophy in the University of Wisconsin, U.S.A. We should occupy ourselves with these people. I cannot deal with them critically in my book. It has already grown too large. But it would be highly interesting to face men like Sellars and Reichenbach with a few straight questions.

This reminds me of something very important. I read in the American magazines that Einstein has written a book! It is called *The World as I See It*. According to reviews, it is really not a book, but a collection of letters, speeches, scientific papers etc. I am naturally curious to know the world as Einstein sees it. This seems to be a curious curiosity, because, for the last two years I have been occupied with the question: What really is the world according to the Theory of Relativity? My curiosity is aroused by a passage quoted by the reviewer. I want to use it in my book, but cannot do so unless I understand what Einstein really means. I would like to hear from him on this point. The passage in question is: "My religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection." It appears that one could easily interpret this sentiment as a support for Jeans' 'Mathematical God' or Laplace's 'World Spirit.'

You did not mention anything directly about the possible outcome of the negotiations our friends have started. But I gather that things are moving hopefully, though slowly. I am pleased that they have given up the crazy

notion of moving to Ireland. Scandinavia should be a convenient place, for all reasons. I don't know what has happened to the Swedes, after all. Are they lost altogether? But in my opinion, it would be better to stick to the present place until something definite comes out of the negotiations.

I read some rumours about Grisha's fate¹ in the newspapers, but not about the Hungarian. He should have been the last one to put his foot into it. As a matter of fact, he should have taken the hurdle neatly. Anyhow, I should not shed tears for him, except for the splendid coffee he used to make. And his wife is a very nice person, just the reverse of the bulky "better half" of his ex-chief who, I understand, now occupies a nominal place of honour in Olympia. I am sorry for Safarov. He was extremely sincere, and we were really good friends. It was an irony for him to have blown the trumpet at the "Ende des Herrn Roy." But like all fanatically sincere people, he has always been somewhat hysterical. As regards Grisha and his kind, I cannot understand them. Why don't they realise the truth—that they are back-numbers. The world does not need them any longer. How much pleasanter it would be for themselves to spend the rest of their lives in the justifiable satisfaction of what they have really contributed. Then, there are so many other things which can occupy intelligent and educated people. In their place, I, for example, would find it terribly exciting to investigate anyone of the following numerous questions: Why the Hindus worship the cow and hate the cat? What is the relation between $\sqrt{-1}$ ² and Jehovah? Why the Mongolians have flat faces?

¹ The rumours were about Zinoviev's execution.

Central Prison, Barceilly,
February 19, 1935.

YOUR letter has come. But unfortunately, it will be several days before I shall get it. It has gone to the police to be censored. Henceforth my correspondence, both ways, will have to undergo this procedure. I suppose this will not be the last straw to break the camel's back.

(Passage struck out) Nothing has come out of the Revision Board, and the Provincial Government has declined to order my premature release. (Passage struck out) Let us be prepared for the worst. It may still be as much as two years. This letter is going to be full of bad news. There is still another. I was not allowed to have the German literature you sent. Don't know why. They have been returned to you. I am, of course, very disappointed. For some time, I have had no light reading. Have been wanting some—for a change. I am sure there were some good novels. Bad luck! Again, must be resigned to it.¹

I am back from the trip—to the hospital—to my old place. The winter is over. Except for a few days of frost and more rain than usual, it was mild. Consequently, I did not have any additional hardships. I have nearly forgotten what is pleasant company. I shall come out more unsociable than ever. I always believed that silence is golden. In future, it will glitter on me like diamonds. But there will be exceptions to the rule in future, as there were in the past! It was a great joy to break the rule, when I talked like a school boy and laughed like a fool!

¹ The German books sent back were mostly all novels by such writers as Thomas Mann, Heinrich Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger, and others like them, and anti-Hitler literature.

I shall not be the least ashamed or inhibited to do the same, with a vengeance this time, when the day will come at last!

There are some good books published lately. But don't bother much about them. I have plenty of reading matter on hand, and another lot is lying with S.—the books sent from New York last summer. I wonder what happened to those books. (Passages struck out).

I presume you are expecting some report about my work. Lately, not much was done. I have been feeling rather out of sorts—mentally. Hence the longing for some light stuff. Nevertheless, I am leisurely working upon the Philosophical Consequences of the Theory of Relativity. I requested you to write to Einstein asking him for a clear statement of his views on a certain point. I am not so much concerned with his personal view, which is likely to be subjectively coloured; yet, it would be interesting. Whatever it may be, that will not influence the logical inference to be deduced from the physical theory. The difficulty is that the United-Field Theory still remains incomplete. Its rounding up—a final statement of the all-embracing Field Law—is vital for definitely establishing the philosophical consequences flowing from the entire system of Relativity Physics. But the latest developments are not accessible to me.

Further study of materials has necessitated some elaboration in the structure of my book. Originally, I planned to deal with the "Philosophical Consequences" in one chapter. The plan has been altered. The material on the point requires a whole section under that title—to be divided into four chapters: Appearance and Reality (Problem of Perception); Idealism or Materialism; Evidence of Biology; and Evidence of Psychology.

You will be interested to know that lately I have been looking rather closely into psycho-analysis. Freud, Adler and Jung can be combined into a system which does not suffer from such extravagant formulas as Father=Horse. However, behaviourism and psycho-analysis lay modern psychology open to the kind of criticism which was levelled against physics as represented by Buechner, Vogt etc. Indeed, we are still atoning for the sins committed by the Mechanists of the nineteenth century. The whole system of present day mystic metaphysics is based upon the confusion of the right thing with the counterfeit current in the nineteenth century. To clear this confusion, is an important task. I don't know how far I shall succeed.

Now I shall finish, obligatorily. Just as the restless son of Philip of Macedonia reluctantly laid down his bloody sword, because there were no more countries to conquer, just so must I lay down my pen, because there is no more paper for it to spoil.

*Central Prison, Bareilly,
March 15, 1935.*

It is a great disillusionment to wake up from a happy dream. But life would be a bore if it was an uninter-broken happy dream.* One must feel the pangs of pain in order to enjoy pleasure. This sounds rather sadistic. But you will understand what I mean. In any case, this miserable scrap of paper discourages any attempt to speculate at length.

Since I wrote my last letter, there has been no change in perspective, as far as I am concerned. I am getting reconciled to the not very pleasing prospect of another two years under the present conditions. Three and a half

years should have been enough. But, man proposes—God disposes. The dark cloud, however, is not without a silver-lining. I shall very probably not have to stay here for the summer, which has already begun. I shall be sent away as last year; where—not known. I shall know it when I am actually there. I shall be pleased to be in the same place as last year. I felt so much better there. (Passage struck out) I can make some inferences only, which are not very consoling.¹ But don't be alarmed. The change will do me good, although still another two years of this life may have adverse effects—of a permanent nature. In that case, I shall have to go to Europe immediately on release for expert medical treatment. In a way, that would be nice. After so many years of this life, a few months of civilised existence would be very welcome and useful. Indeed, I feel homesick for the physical, intellectual and social environments, to which I got accustomed ever since I began really to live. Physical hardships regarding the daily absolute necessities of life—one could somehow get used to. But strange intellectual and cultural environments are very galling, particularly when one cannot even have the luxury of "splendid isolation" which I love. Of course, it can be practised to some extent in abstraction. For example, one could sit physically in a drawing room full of after dinner chatter, and spiritually be far away—withdrawn into one's own shell. But that is possible only because the ordeal is of short duration—of a few hours, at the most. After that, you return to your own world.

Have the German books returned to you? So much trouble for nothing! The English books you mentioned

¹ I was not sent to the Almorah Jail because Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was there.

have also not come. Don't send any more foreign stuff. Buy British! Or patronise the Transatlantic cousin. As regards scientific literature, I should like to have some more new publications, such as *The New Conception of Matter* by C. G. Darwin; *The Mechanism of Nature* by E. N. da C. Andrade; *Space, Time and Deity* by Alexander; Jeans' new book; *The Passing of the Gods* by V. F. Calverton; and *Technique and Civilisation* by Louis Mumford.

I hope you are not very disappointed by the fact that the Happy Day may not be as near as we fondly hoped. You could not have been really very optimistic. But you can never know what may happen any day. No false hope. Yet, there is nothing absolutely predestined. Life is full of surprises.

Central Prison, Bareilly.

April 24, 1935.

I AM still in the same place, expecting to be shifted by the beginning of the next month. My next letter will be very likely from there, and then you shall know where it is. Yes, it is high summer here already. I am glad to hear that you have made up your mind to take a month's holiday. The South is no good for the summer, except for the idle rich who go not for physical exertion, but to drink cocktails in Casinos. You may find a nice seaside place in Brittany. I have heard much of the rugged beauty of that coast, though never seen it. Victor Hugo's *Toilers of the Sea* has a graphic description. I presume you won't choose Dieppe or Deauville. For heaven's sake, don't! There will be no rest. I hope my summer vacation will be as pleasant as last year. I shall need it. Must fortify myself for another two years.

We should get used to the idea of another two years. It may be less. Ordinarily, that is, if I was a common criminal, I could get away with four and a half years at the most. As it is, the account promises to run up to six years. So, that is that. No use being disappointed over and over again. The perspective is not very pleasant. It is depressing. But it is better to be prepared for the worst than to be always hoping against hope. However, the people in England should not slacken their efforts to get me out as early as possible. I am ashamed of making the confession, but I am getting fed up. Four years of this life is more than is tolerable. The idea of its lasting another two years is positively gloomy.

Your last meeting with the Dutchman does not seem to have been as pleasant as previous experiences. I know he gets tiresome in some respects. But he has a heart of gold—as regards personal matters. I value him as a personal friend, as far as personal friendship can be distinguished from other relations. Lately, you have written very little about our friends, particularly Heinz and August. Don't you see them as often as ever? I eagerly wait to hear about them. I hope they are not forgetting me, in the midst of other affairs. I am keenly concerned with their affairs also. This hardly needs be mentioned. It is unfortunate that the negotiations should proceed so slowly. There is plenty of reason to hurry up matters. I can only wish and hope. It is so exasperating to be helpless.

The Stresa Conference and the Extraordinary Meeting of the League Council appear to have cleared away the war cloud which recently hung so ominously over Europe. No Government, composed of men with the least amount of the sense of responsibility, could contemplate precipi-

tating an armed conflict in these days. That is the decisive guarantee against the danger of war, which is otherwise acute, and is getting more so daily. The world is in a precarious equilibrium, which may be upset so very easily—to general disaster. But for once in its life, the League seems to be proving effective. The resolution of the Extraordinary Meeting is impressive. It will discourage the mad men running amuck. That is something.

Did you never get to see Jacques? Why does he make himself so scarce? He cannot really believe that he can play a lone hand—to create a kingdom of his own, and rule it like Emperor Jones. I am very anxious to know what his relation is with our friends. But I wanted you to meet him, because I believe he would make a good personal friend, and he is a child of Paris. I must lose my enthusiasm for him if he has failed to see you even on your announcing that you have a message from me to deliver. I can hardly believe that he would act like that. Yet, one can never tell. This is a funny world,—full of surprises.

*District Jail, Dehra Dun,
May, 20, 1935.*

HERE I am at a new place, this year. I came just a week ago. This place is not nearly as good as Almorah. It is only about 2500 feet high—a low and lowly footstool, so to say, of the majestic Himalayas. Naturally, it is warmer than Almorah. But it is certainly an improvement upon Bareilly. Generally, the summer threatens to be more severe this year. But it will begin to rain on this side after another month, and it will cool down. Just now, it is rather hot. This year I am out of favour with the Himalayan gods. They would not have me any nearer

their home. A mortal must bow down before the gods. I can write very little about the place. I was here ages ago—before I went abroad. Since then, everything has changed so much in this country. Now it is quite a modern place, and getting to be of importance. The jail, however, is very small and my place is proportionately tiny. I am living, all by myself, in a small room, placed inside a nice little box of walls. Over them, I can only see the top of some tall trees outside. The neighbouring mountains I can only imagine. Not even a glimpse of them is accessible to me. That's a great pity. Last year it was not so bad. But here I am all alone, free from undesirable company, which has been the bane of my life for these three years and more. Now I shall be content with my books and thoughts, and none to disturb. I am glad.

Henceforth, our correspondence shall have to follow a zigzag course. Having reached here, your letters must travel several hundred miles eastwards for police censorship, and then come back again. That journey will take a few days. Mine also will first go to the opposite direction. It is so cruel to deprive us of the consolation of having our limited correspondence by return post.

When? Don't you think that I am also tormented by the same question? How could I do anything but deeply sympathize with your impatience. Where? That does not matter at all,—anywhere! I would not mind even a long sea voyage, which kills my appetite and makes me feel dull as a door nail. At last, I have fallen into the prisoner's habit of counting days. There is a confession! In another two months, it will be four years. It is a terribly long time. And why? Who would give a satisfactory answer?

Let us leave this unpleasant subject, and talk of something else. You asked my opinion about Malraux's book. My feelings are rather mixed; therefore, I did not express them. Particularly, I did not wish that they should be communicated to him. I am reading the book once again—this time in English translation. My first impression on reading the original remains unchanged. It is difficult to express my views so as not to be misunderstood. There is no doubt that it is a good, if not a great book. But I fail to understand how its defects, so very palpable, have escaped the notice of practically everybody. The main defect is the very large element of romanticism which runs throughout the realist texture of the book. It seems that this defect has saved him from the anathema of being a propagandist, and has earned for his work the distinction of "pure literature." But I think even from the point of view of "pure literature", (whatever that may be), the defect is evident. It is a question of psychology. Is introspection, often of a very morbid nature, possible in the midst of the atmosphere of the feverish activity which the book so magnificently depicts? An affirmative answer to this question is not permitted by psychology. Yet, Malraux's heroes are all introspective—to the point of being morbid. This discord is very jarring. No theory of pure literature can explain it away. The artist has created his characters. That is true. But the argument holds good only so long as the characters are created out of the background of reality. If they are created out of the imagination of the artist, then, why kick against romanticism? It is said that Malraux has kept strictly to factual material. There is room for more than one opinion on this point. But leaving that aside, it can be asserted that he has let his imagination run riot. That by itself

would not be wrong, if he could imagine correctly. But correct imagination is no longer imagination; it is inference. The psychological state of Malraux's heroes does not fit into the scheme of their physical activities. The one does not result from the other. That is the main thesis of my criticism, with which I do not wish to disturb the chorus of praise. The elaboration of this thesis would bring many other minor points in relief. I am not in a position to do that now. But such a criticism of an otherwise admirable book is necessary. There is a deep-rooted philosophical problem involved; and that, in its turn, has its reflexes in the world of practicality. I can summarise my criticism with a significant alarm—beware of idealist deviation! Our very home and hearth are menaced by this danger, which is, of course, disguised. Look for subjectivism in any form, and you shall be on the track of the disguised danger. Scratch the Russian, and you shall find the Tartar! Malraux's splendidly drawn picture is tarnished by an unconscious idealist deviation. Subjectivism has earned him the distinction of a "pure artist". But do we need art which soars high above the reach of the realities of life? Malraux's pure art violates the rudimentary truths of bio-mechanics. This is evident in the very first chapter of the book. All he needed was to compose Chen's soliloquy, and nervous extravagances, in blank verse, and we would hail the resurrection of Greek Tragedy. That would beat even Macbeth. I hear that Malraux has won the patronage of the Lion. No wonder! Subjectivism is the common tie.

I am hungry for some good detective stories. Pure literature is too highbrow for me. I shall be plunging in my work again, as soon as it cools down a bit. It is too enervating just now to do any serious writing. The days are

impossible, and in the evenings I fell fagged out. I cannot tell as yet how this place will affect my health. In any case, it cannot do any harm. How I long to be somewhere very high up—up in the mountains! Then I shall be alright again—ready for the battles of life. When is this tedious trench warfare going to end? It is so tiring. But I shall stick it out. The journey's end is in sight. Next year by this time, we shall be making definite plans for the future.

District Jail, Dehra Dun,

June 21, 1935.

I FEEL so envious to read of your sitting at the window with a woollen jacket on—in the beginning of June. Here we are having a fierce summer. The heat is unusually intense. It feels as if I was at Bareilly. Only, in a way, it is worse here. There I was kept in a big compound with a lot of open space. The room was also big with three big gratings. I could breathe in the evenings inside the room. Here, my tiny room is placed in a tiny box of high walls. There is hardly any place to move about. In the night, not a breath of air comes in, and I cannot even bathe. Well, one cannot expect to be comfortable in prison. Besides, it is unusual this year. It never gets so hot here. Just think, for the last five or six weeks we had a temperature of 105, 106 or 107 degrees F. in the shade. At Bareilly, of course, it was another eight or ten degrees more. So, that much to the good, anyhow. The rains are late this year. Usually, they come earlier in these regions at the foot of the hills. We are waiting for them to come and hoping that they will come soon.

Lately, I have been feeling somewhat worse, may be, due to the weather. The pains are getting rather uncom-

fortable, and I feel very weak. I hope I shall feel better as soon as it begins to rain, and the weather cools down. It cannot keep up like this much longer. In any case, there is no use complaining. I must take it philosophically. Not much can be done so long as I am in this condition, and that means another year and half. What the state of my health will be by that time, we shall know only then. No use speculating beforehand. Let us hope for the best, and face the none too bright perspective with courage and calm.

My going to America, even in case I shall have to go abroad for medical reasons, cannot be counted as a practical possibility. It is too far away. I do not want to squander away the thing for which we are paying so very dearly. But there is no great objection to your going; besides, it appears that you shall have to go. There are heaps of Americans living permanently abroad. Gertrud Stein returned after 35 years—not to pay taxes, but to earn money by lecturing. Have you seriously considered the possibility of your acquiring French citizenship? I can hardly believe that there is no way of getting around the difficulty. It is so silly. You were born in France, and can claim the right of citizenship by birth. It is true that the Great Revolution declared the Rights of Man only. But today we are living in the twentieth century, and it cannot be argued that your birth on the French soil does not count as a birth because you were not born a male!

The other day, I read a quotation from Marie Dressler's autobiography. I don't recollect the exact words. It is something like this: "A woman cannot be without beauty and charm when she knows that she is precious in the eyes of a man." The ultra-modern would find the

old lady out of date. It does contain some remnant of the old ideal of womanhood—live for the lord and master! Yet, taken not too literally, there is wisdom in the view of an old experienced hand, as she is. Then, you can look at it from another side, and discover coquetry. But coquetry too has a basis of wisdom.

How did you come to think that I shall have to write about psycho-analysis in my book? It was not included in the synopsis I sent to you. But since then, I have come to see that a comprehensive treatment of the subject-matter needs inclusion of psychology in the scheme. And psycho-analysis naturally comes in. In this connection, I need some information about the literature on *Gestalt Psychologie*. What other books can be useful, except the works of Koehler and Kofka? I have decided to expand the chapter on the "Philosophical Consequences of New Physics" into a separate section under the title, "Philosophical Consequences of Modern Science", to be divided as follows: Chapter I: New Physics (Statement of basic theories; trend of latest research—Wave Mechanics; continuity of scientific knowledge; relation of the Theory of Relativity with classical physics; reconciliation of the Quantum phenomena with the principle of continuity); Chapter II: Philosophical Problems (Main issue raised is epistemological; epistemology not the whole of philosophy; ontological problems; truth; reality versus appearance; unity in diversity; physics invades the realm of metaphysics; creation of an *a posteriori* system of metaphysics); Chapter III: Cosmology (Einstein's Theory of Gravitation; the concept of force disappears; classical Mechanics and *Deus ex Machina*; relativist Mechanics is self-contained; gravitational force—least action—geodesics; self-finite but unbounded space

gives a concrete form to the abstract concept of infinity; Chapter IV: Space and Time (Absolutist theory finally liquidated; Kantian ideas also set aside; space is a physical reality; space is not a void, but contains matter; it is a property of matter; time—expression of change; relation between time and motion; space-time represents a dialectic cosmological conception); Chapter V—Substance and Causality (Electric nature of matter; material composition of electricity; Wave Theory; unitary conception; elimination of mass versus energy dualism; relation of being and happening; being realises itself in becoming; static view of inert mass replaced by a dynamic conception; simple location in space an abstraction; no such thing in nature; everything always is in movement; “events” represent substance in movement; causality and probability not mutually exclusive; determinism is distinct from predestination; causal connections amongst endless entities can be stated only in terms of probability—statistically; probability is determinism applied to infinity; elementary units of matter do not exist individually; therefore, deep down in the microcosmic world determinism can be expressed only statistically; statistical laws presuppose causal connections; Chapter VI: Theory of Knowledge (Epistemology and Modern Philosophy; Positivism; problem of perception; fallacies of the causal theory; mechanistic conception of mind; external world—a misnomer; mind is a part of the “external world”; the machinery of cognition; defence of induction; application of differential laws); Chapter VII: Dialectic Materialism (Mechanical conception freed from fallacies; ontological validity of knowledge proved *a posteriori*; problem of perception solved; idea of absolute banished metaphysical reality of matter, experimentally proved).

I am sorry I cannot give as yet the detailed description of the other two chapters on "Evidence of Biology" and "Evidence of Psychology."

District Jail, Dehra Dun,

July 21, 1935

TODAY I complete four years of my imprisonment. There remain another fifteen or sixteen months. If I am lucky, it may not be more than a year. It is high time that the journey's end was in sight,—though sufficiently distant. By the time I am out, even at the earliest possible date, I shall have spent five years in jail—the longest period of this life that any human being should be forced to undergo. I always considered more than five years imprisonment to be worse than a death sentence. Personally, I would always prefer the latter to the former. Now, experience has confirmed my opinion. It would be humanising penology, if civilised governments reformed it in this sense. Incidentally, it would be very economical. In these days of chronic budget deficits, any measure of economy should be carefully considered.

In my case, the last lapse of this terrible ordeal threatens to be difficult, even if I should be fortunate not to be forced to stand it longer than I would wish it generally to be. Even another year of this life appears to be a dreadful and depressing prospect. It may be too much, physically. The change this year has done me no good. Indeed, it has been no change, either as regards climate or altitude. These two months and a half have been gruelling and have left their mark on my power of resisting the other innumerable pleasantries of this life. But is it life? How can a civilised being be submitted to it for a number of years?

There is a lot of rain now, and the heat has lost its fierceness. But it has become nasty instead. This damp heat is hateful, specially when one has a very limited amount of clothing—and what clothing! The clothing gets soaked with perspiration, and everything smells repulsively. Once clothes are washed, it may take days to dry them, and meanwhile, one must wear smelly clothes. What a life! The straw mattress is damp and dank. The coarse blanket of raw wool makes my little musty room smell like the China Town. Of course, measured by the standard of comforts permissible to a prisoner, this all may be as it should be.

I feel very weak, so much so that often the least exertion compels me to lie down. And the movements for daily routine, washing, bathing etc,—amounts to exertion. It seems that the heat has aggravated the dilation of heart. The pain in the chest remains, sometimes getting rather disagreeable. Last week it was very acute for several days. The temperature again rises slightly in the evenings. On the whole, I feel miserable and depressed, worse than ever during the last four years. Therefore, I am more confirmed than ever in my opinion that death would be preferable to more than five years (at a stretch) of this life. I hope it would not be necessary to make the choice actually; and the joke of it is that you cannot make the choice! One should think that a man was free to do whatever he likes with his own life. But civilization does not give man even that much freedom. Yet, they say that slavery exists only in the kingdom of His Majesty the Power of the Trinity (Abyssinia), and give the twentieth century Caesar moral support and diplomatic connivance in his mission to carry the torch of civilization into that dark home of original Christianity.

It is foolish of me to write all these tales of woe. You cannot help. It will only make you also miserable.

Your account of the Writers' Congress is interesting. The provisional agenda of the Congress was published in an American magazine. It is stupendous, to put it mildly. I wonder if the Congress really went through all that. It could not possibly. For, in that case it should have sat not for a week, but at least for a month. To go through that agenda would mean to survey the whole cultural history of Europe ever since the Renaissance, with a glance farther backward on ancient Greece. In any case, there must have been some highly interesting discussions, in addition to the surrealist offensive checked by Malraux's chairmanship. Who ran the show? Willy-chen? With Babette bringing up the rear? Gide is an acquisition—I should say. Romain Rolland cannot be relied upon. His last book is a mess,—moral debacle of an intellectual giant. By the way, it is really funny—Mike Gold making a hundred per cent speech! I remember the day when he was not even fifty per cent. But he is an extremely decent fellow, personally. I am sorry that he puts me down as a "lost friend." He is very emotional, and a big baby—will always remain one. That is his charm, although he may overdo it. He is delightful in the state of drunkenness. When I first met him, I was still a puritan. He made strenuous efforts to contaminate me, and, as far as I remember, did start me on the downward path! When he challenged me, I could not say that he was bad because he drank. Because, that would have been telling a lie, and I could not do that with all my puritanism!

Some time back, I sent you a list of new scientific books. I want the following particularly: *History of*

Science and its Relation with Philosophy and Religion by W. C. D. Dampier Wetham; *The New Conception of Matter* by C. D. Darwin; *Philosophical Basis of Biology* by Haldane; *Process and Reality* by Whitehead; *Science and Human Experience* by H. Dingle; *Where is Science Going?* by Hyman Levy; *The Metaphysical Foundation of Modern Science* by Edwin Burtt. That is a rather long order; but I must have them. I have been having some difficulty about literature required for my work, which is my only joy in this dreary life. I have got directly as much as possible. But even the booksellers in this country cannot supply all I require. Therefore, they must come from abroad. Another thing I want very particularly; it is Einstein's latest work, which co-ordinates atomic phenomena with the general Theory of Relativity. It is published in the Review of the American Physical Society. I am terribly keen about this thing; because it bears out the guess which I made while drawing the philosophical consequences of Quantum Mechanics. As a matter of fact, I have actually written that the "uncertainty of Quantum phenomena would be eventually explained by the application of the physical principle of Relativity to the microcosmic world, and that Einstein's United Field Theory was moving in that direction of a grand synthesis of modern physical knowledge."

District Jail, Dehra Dun,

August 20, 1935.

I UNDERSTAND that, in these thirties, the modern Venus need not actually starve to keep her lines boyishly hard, and rather repulsively straight. Because, according to the current standard of beauty, she can tolerate as much as 135 pounds to five feet eight inches! Besides, the Olym-

pian ladies were not actually slim. They were inclined towards round curves. Aesthetic value is supposed to be not quantitative. Now, that's banal platitude. To rectify it, let me recover my scientific sense, and declare that no value is real unless a number can be attached to it. Has not the delightful Eddington taught us that the world is composed of "pointer-readings"? But my aesthetic heresy is quite *fin de siècle*. It is fully non-Euclidean. It is all for curvature, and won't tolerate straight lines. Besides, life begins at forty, anyhow, and at forty one gets over the childish craving for rigidity, and inclines towards the comfortable.

We are having plenty of rain, and the weather has cooled down appreciably. We have had already about fifty inches. The annual average of this place is more than double that much. So, ordinarily, much is still due. Usually, the rainy season continues here until the middle of September. After that, the weather gets very good. October and November are said to be delightful. It never gets really cold here, not as much as at Almorah. It is only a point on the footstool of the mighty Himalayas. Therefore, I would have preferred to stay on here. But I am afraid it will very probably be like last year; I shall be sent back to Bareilly at the beginning of October. I am quite happy at this place. It is a great relief to be rid of the company given me at Bareilly. Generally, I like to be alone; if I must have company, I should like to have the choice. But a prisoner cannot choose. Once I gave you the description of one of my worthy companions. The rest are all of the same cast, more or less. I mean, mould, not in the sense of caste system! My companion at Almorah was a joke as well as a torture. Here, I am the monarch of all I survey. I enjoy this sovereignty, though

it extends over such a tiny dominion. I have had some flowers planted along the wall of my kingdom. They are blooming red, purple and lavender. They look beautiful. Unfortunately they will die by the end of the rainy season. It's a pity that such beautiful things should die. Do they have souls? I ask them, but they don't answer.

Just these days, I have been writing about the light thrown by modern scientific research upon the old notion of immortality. Naturally, the doctrine of soul has been on the desecrating table. Hence my wondering about the soul of blossoming flower plants. But don't be alarmed. I am not going mystic, although for the last couple of years I have got thoroughly acquainted with everything that the Neo-Mystics have to say. Modern physicists in search of God—an incredible phenomenon of this topsy-turvy period of history! And when clever people set about to defend the lost cause, they don't fail to make a plausible, though extremely precarious, case. Have you ever heard of *Neutralism*? This is Bertrand Russell's latest; no, I am afraid, the latest is the divorce from Dora. The chap has an amazing mind. Associated with wealth, and the consequent leisure, intellectualism runs wild. If any of the contemporary philosophers takes up an out and out solipsist position, and hides it by brilliant sophistry, that's Russell. He is twentieth century Hume, and cheerfully, with blissful irresponsibility, goes much farther than the master. In support of his epistemological scepticism (I should say, nihilism), he actually argues that, when a physiologist observes the brain of a person, he experiences nothing but some events in his own brain. I am inclined to say that one must have a brain-fever to put forth such arguments. Yet, a lost cause must be defended by every possible means. These doughty defenders

of the lost cause are actuated by the maxim: Offence is the best defence. They feel the wall on their back. But they are putting up a splendid fight. No denying that. It is a mistake to ignore them, or judge them lightly-heartedly by our own standard. This foolish mistake is committed by people on the other side of the line. That is a simple and easy way. But the fact is that Neo-Mysticism has a nearly untouched reserve to fall back upon. That is traditional prejudice. No; it is a great mistake to follow the line of least resistance. The people must be met on their own ground; should be judged by their own standards. It is easy to operate with *clichés* and quotations. But they don't carry much weight. They may be conclusive arguments with those already convinced; but to others, we must speak in their language. Our weapon should be criticism—to expose the internal fallacies of the modern scientific religion. Of course, this requires time. Fortunately (?) I have had plenty of it, and therefore could do some sound thinking, which will have its practical consequence, sooner or later, I hope. Only, to do the job as thoroughly as I am eager to do, it is necessary to have a whole library of specialized literature, and facilities for systematic research. None of these are available to me here. Consequently, the production is bound to be rather sketchy, and methodologically defective. Besides, under the most favourable conditions, it would take at least five years to execute the plan I have before me. Therefore, I should be satisfied if even a third of it were accomplished. The rest? We shall see.

Now I shall give you a little surprise. At Bareilly, I raised a nice cat. About two years ago, it came—a tiny thing, with its mother. I gave it some milk, and it stayed. I got very fond of it. But my companion violently object-

ed to its being. It is strange that people should worship the cow and hate the cat. But I won't give in. There were other difficulties to overcome. The poor little thing was nearly killed by three dogs. Fortunately, being a cat, it had nine lives, and so could do without two or three thrown to the dogs. The result was that I began to see the world through my cat's green eyes, and that was an amusing sight. So much so that I was encouraged to record *The Reflexions of My Cat*—something on the lines of *Autobiography of Alice Toklas* by Gertrude Stein. Nothing so very high-brow, of course. Only the method. Practically every word will be understandable by the ordinary mortal man and immortal woman. As regards Gertrude Stein's composition, one should feel himself a part of the *élite* if he gets the truth out of it. But she says that she writes as she speaks. I would like to hear the expatriated oracle at least once. That would be enough. But my cat speaks very plainly, and about homely matters which are expected to interest some, though they are sure to shock many. She speaks about such horrible facts as her love affairs with her father. (By the way, it is a she-cat; that makes it more interesting). She defends what by human standards is perversity, by her own argument, and triumphantly calls in the authority of eminent anthropologists, like Sir James Frazer, and famous sociologists who hold that the tendency to incest is instinctive in the human as well as in the lower animals. The trouble is that I could not observe her behaviour and her reaction to human contact as closely and systematically as I wished. Last year I was away at Almorah for five months. She was still very young. That's when loneliness and cruel treatment by the religious souls of my companions drove her to give

in to instinct, and prematurely go in for the experience of maternity with the co-operation of her father who, by the way, was my pet abomination. The offsprings of such early matrimony, of course, were dead soon after birth—not dead, but killed by the barbarous father. Another bitter experience she records is the sentimental bubble of paternal love burst so cruelly. Now, I had to leave her again.

I wanted to keep this surprise back to be sprung upon you personally. But I had to do something to compensate for the last month's gloomy epistle. I am really ashamed of that. There is another bit of news. The sick lady I wrote about last year has gone to Europe for treatment. She is somewhere in the south of Germany, recovering from an operation in Berlin. I did not know that there were still left in the Third Reich surgeons who could be trusted for serious operations.

*District Jail, Dehra Dun,
September 22, 1935.*

PLEASANT thoughts are the salt of the earth, and the art of life is to have a fill of them. Now, that's plagiarism. Old Montaigne, I believe. I count his *Essays* among the pleasantest and cleverest things ever written. I read them long ago. The ultra-modern, or should I say, the ultra-Montaigne, cannot quite scorn them without betraying cultural boorishness; but they consider them old-fashioned, not to be taken seriously by those possessed of a new dogma, and busy with the foundation of a new Church with its Saints, Fathers, creeds and miracles. I have tabulated them in their respective historic roles—Paul, Peter, Athanasius, Tertullian, Augustin, so on and so forth. Only, Saint Thomas is still to appear on the scene, unless

Rudas is considered to be filling that role. You know him, don't you? We are just passing through the period of Aryan controversy. But enough of ecclesiastical history, although it is a fascinating subject, and I find great delight in reconstructing it with new material. The old one I studied in the first year of my imprisonment, when I was working upon the projected *History of Scientific Thought*, which, owing to insurmountable technical difficulties, had to be abandoned in a partly finished stage. But practically all the materials are collected to be worked out whenever the suitable opportunity will present itself.

I had an incidental purpose for studying ecclesiastical history—to settle an old account with August. We had some difference as regards the value of mediaeval learning. He thought I underestimated the positive contribution of mediaeval culture. I think, on the whole, I have come round to his view.

Oh yes, I was talking of Montaigne, when I went off at a tangent. But these letters are not meant to be orderly essays. They are long distance talks, and as such can be erratic. I was going to say that I wanted to read Montaigne's *Essays* once again. But unfortunately, could not get them, not even from some of the biggest booksellers of the country. They might be out of print—in English, though I know there are several popular editions which are not likely to be altogether exhausted. The French original will certainly be available.

Talking about books, I have the great pleasure of informing you that my faithful Dutchman has not failed me. Some days ago, ten books came from him—all novels, and a careful collection too, including the latest Van Dine. Please, write to him thanking on my behalf that I am extremely grateful, and touched by his personal

loyalty. I wished this virtue was more common to find. It is so sordid to drag personal relations in differences, and controversies which could and should be conducted on the level of objectivity. You might also communicate to him that the debt I contracted through him just before my departure from Europe has been liquidated. He shall know of it eventually, if he has had no inkling already. Only, he may not approve of what has happened. But he knew, when he advanced his help, that I was not likely to travel his way.

I am not going back to Bareilly. This place is said to be good in winter. The summer here was hardly any better than in Bareilly. Now I shall try the winter. It cannot be worse. It won't be as cold as Almorah, where I would have gladly gone through last winter, if permitted. I shall be able to warm my box with a handful of charcoal. So, it will be alright. I have grown rather attached to my box. Freedom from unwelcome, promiscuous, company is a great relief. Never in my life could I live in the same room with another, even of the most agreeable kind. At Bareilly, sometimes, I had to be with three of the kind I once described. Aren't you glad that I shall not have to return to that disagreeable situation?

A crop of my flowers—the red, purple and lavender ones—is dying. But the next one is almost ready to follow. This time, the flowers will be yellow—marigold. After them will come—what do you guess?—Chrysanthemums! All in my tiny box—on the narrow strip of ground along the foot of its outer shell!

There is another reason why I am thankful for not having to go back to Bareilly. It is this process of transfer from one jail to another. I hate it, although it affords a glimpse of the world, shut out for years by forbidding

walls. But the price is too high. A prisoner on transfer is put in bar fetters—heavy iron things, not at all nice to have on your ankles. Then, to be paraded in public in such an outfit is outrageous. I don't know why these precautions are necessary in case of prisoners who walked into captivity, and would be free today if they wanted to avoid imprisonment. Well, it is all routine, I suppose. Anyhow, I don't like it, and am glad that I shall not have to repeat the experience. I may be kept here for the rest of my time, which will not be more than another year. Isn't it marvellous to have at last arrived at this stage when months, and not years, remain to be counted! Even months are long enough, by God; yet, they are not years. They will fly away, bringing the journey's end within a measurable distance

Only the other day, I read somewhere that conceit is God's gift to little men. Where is my greatness I have just been bragging about? But I meant only physical magnitude. No, it is not conceit! It is the expression of a feeling deep, deep down in myself. Now you understand what I mean. No conceited maleness in it.

I wonder if Heinz and August did go to the Exhibition¹ and how they found it. As far as I can see, it was an orgy of hero worship—and gods with clay feet at that. The Bandit raised to the high pedestal!² What an idea! I thought old Marx taught us that history was not made by great men! And here are his devotees not only indulging in the cult of hero worship, but actually manufacturing heroes for the purpose. But that's an old story.

¹ Seventh World Congress of the Communist International.

² Reference is to the appointment of Dimitroff as the General Secretary of the Communist International.

Man always makes gods, and then worships them, thus debasing himself as well as his gods. Yet, I hope some good will come out. The bitter experience must tell. I have heard a faint echo of very amusing happenings. One must have a great sense of humour to avoid falling into a mood of bitterness. But let the world go to the dogs, as it surely will if Mussolini succeeds in setting it aflame. We shall make a world of our own, somewhere high up on the Himalayas, Andes or Atlas.

District Jail, Dehra Dun,

October 21, 1935.

I AM compelled to live all by myself—in thought, recollections and dreams. I wrote you that I did not believe in miracles. Indeed, I need not tell you that. Who believes in humbug in these days? Miracle-makers are charlatans; and believers are fools. Intellectually, I hold on to the opinion that miracles are signs of abnormality. Emotionally, I revel in the belief. But in the last analysis, it is poor devotion which is inspired only by the performance of the impossible. Why do the devout place such a burden on the object of their worship? That is the fundamental fallacy of religious faith, which keeps the human soul in spiritual slavery in the name of elevation. The religious debase their God by compelling him to be deceitful, hypocritical or—a Freudian complex. All amount to the same thing—not human.

There is still a year to run, not quite though. Now, only months are to be counted, and there will be no more than ten to count, I reckon. This prospect may warm you up to face the winter, even if *chauffage central* should cease to function in December, as would be quite likely in Paris! While you are having the nasty Paris

autumn, the climate is splendid here just now. This is the best part of the year. From December, it will begin to rain again, and my room will need a long distance spray of perfume. For the present, the climate is nice, and I feel quite alright. Have been doing a lot of work, and enjoying modern fictions sent by the faithful Dutchman. But what tripe most of this highbrow stuff is! Intellectual chaos, moral decay and spiritual confusion. I am just reading Aldous Huxley's magnum opus—*Point Counter-Point*. No. I believe the place of honour belongs to *Antic Hay*. It is dreary reading. All social, emotional and moral problems are reduced, to Freudian formulae. I think one could characterise the performance as Spenglerism dramatised—a graphic picture of the "Decline of the West". Only, it is such nonsense to identify a whole civilisation—the highest hitherto attained in human history—with a point of the compass. The book, admirable in technique, has no purpose. I suppose that's precisely its artiness—pure art! No propaganda—God forbid! You must not have any conviction, no vision, no perspective—if you want to be distinguished as an artist. But can one live in a glass house?

The present plight of literature is very well described in a recently published book by an ex-Russian prince. I did not see the book, but read several reviews. Of course, he writes with the fanaticism of a convert. He is one, by the way; has gone home to Mother Volga. But it seems that the book is a good piece of criticism. He has some rather strong words to say about Huxley; and I find that they are not utterly misplaced. Is it not intellectual morbidity to picture the spectacle of decay as an orgy of phallic fanaticism? Suppressed sex was the canker of Victorian culture; now, nature is having her revenge. That

is Huxley's social philosophy (or diagnosis) in a nutshell! I wonder if that can be the foundation for any durable intellectual or cultural creation. These artists are supposed to be creative geniuses! Well, the Dutchman was thoughtful enough to include some good detective stories in the collection to satisfy my mean literary taste. I am afraid, highbrow stuff is too rich for my plebeian stomach; or, to put it less modestly, I am afraid I am a classicist in literary (artistic, generally) taste. This is a bad sign, I suppose. But I am unregenerate. Hardy or even Galsworthy can tell me more about the anatomy, physiology and pathology of Victorian, Edwardian or Georgian society than all these ultra-Freudians, brazen behaviourists and neo-romantic mystics, passing as realists, even as revolutionaries.

By the way, did you ask someone in America to send me the *Physical Review* in which the latest version of Einstein's United Field Theory is published? I am very anxious to have it. I wish someone would send it soon.

I am glad that you are so interested in my cat. I also thought of taking it along. It is really a very pretty cat, but rather self-willed and reluctant to be tamed. It always keeps by itself, aloof from, and indifferent to, petting. It comes to sleep in my bed, though. But I am afraid you shall see it only in its "Recollections", which are left off for the present, because of my cosmological preoccupations.

What do you know of the girl with Titian hair? Are you gathering biographical materials? But let me correct a point of detail: Her eyes were not grey-green, but red brown. Anyhow, in connection with my cat's recollections, I referred to Gertrude Stein—the Great, though not pretty. The American expatriate, who for a quarter of

a century was the matriarch of the *Quartier Latin*, having had wived, mistressed or mothered a whole galaxy of luminaries of the contemporary artistic firmament—from Picasso to Hemingway. She is not generally known to ordinary mortals, because what she writes cannot be understood. The reason for this, according to herself, is that she writes just as she speaks. But lately she has made her debut in the vulgar world which is finding untold literary treasures in what was hitherto considered to be an unintelligible jargon. That is not altogether unprecedented. There have been others who came to be hailed as prophets simply because they wrote what nobody could understand, or said the commonest platitudes. Nietzsche and Joyce belong to the first category, and our Mahatma to the latter. Who really understands "Zarathustra" ?

I also find the result of the last World Exhibition satisfactory. Only, a lot of things were too flashy and superficial to command confidence. There was a lack of spontaneity, and absence of a robust assertion of the lessons of experience. Yet, as an Indian proverb goes, a blind uncle is better than no uncle ! Let us be gratified with whatever is realised, and hope for more. No intellectual independence—that is the curse. And this disease has objective causes. Yet, it must be cured before there can be any really healthy development. That has been always my opinion, and it remains. I have been accused of "intellectualism"; but that is not as despicable as sycophancy. One must be able to do one's own thinking, and have the courage to express it freely. Scholasticism (quoting Scriptures) and hero worship must be replaced by self-confidence and self-expression. But what can you expect, unless you have a self?

District Jail, Dehra Dun,
November 20, 1935.

FROM the vivid picture you drew, the place does appear to be ideal for holidays for unsocial people, or with people who prefer to choose their company, and usually find it in themselves or very very near—so much so that geometrical space loses meaning, and even the thinnest barrier is not tolerated. I have never been in that corner of Europe—one of the few I missed. I cannot afford to have the famous Basque Coast excluded from my memoirs for all the time, although it can no longer be regarded so, strictly speaking. Besides, corporally, I did visit the Basque land—the Spanish coast, just across the right angle from where you were. Ages ago, I was for a few days at Santander—ex-King Alfonso's seaside resort. Being in the company of a Mexican diplomat with a Parisian wife, I, of course, visited the fashionable place *comme il faut*. So, between us, now we possess a composite view of what the Basque Coast can offer.

However, it's a pity that your much needed holiday was but a partial success. Last year also, your holiday in England was spoiled by rain. By the way, what happened to that Hindenburg Biography which interfered with your holiday? Yes, stormy, even tempestuous weather by the sea can be very magnificent, provided that it can be watched from a warm comfortable shelter. The saintly Hospice seems to have provided you with that condition. I hope you were not required to live a saintly life in that Pavillion Sainte Therese! I suppose it was not too far from Bordeaux to have plenty of good wine; and the bouncing Basques are proverbially jolly. Hugo's D'Artagnan was a Basque, wasn't he? Your picking shells reminds me of my rather beautiful collection of stones last year at

Almorah. But I had to leave them behind when I was sent back to Bareilly. The Himalaya is a big baby, compared with such venerable pigmies as the Alps or the Pyrenees. It popped out of the sea only the other day, geologically speaking. So, you can scarcely find any real rock in it. But I did find some quartz—almost as clear as crystal, and some nice green stones with red veins.

This reminds me that after the Bihar earthquake of two years back August wished to know something about its cause. Since then, this part of the world has had yet another shock, more intensive, though less extensive. There has been some geological investigation on the basis of the data discovered by these two phenomena, taking place in the same region, unusually close temporally. The conclusion, tentatively drawn, appears to corroborate the Gwandwanaland theory. Should it turn out to be a definitely established fact that the lands inhabited by the three main species of anthropoid apes were contiguous, then Haeckel's conjecture about the original birthplace of man (*Lamuria*) would be borne out, and the theory of migrations from Central Asia should have to be definitely abandoned. Man was originally black, not blonde. What a shock for Hitler! And particularly to the Baltic (Jew?) Rosenberg! Well, to return to the point, these earthquakes seem to offer stronger geological evidence in support of the shameful ancestry of man. The missing link may be found lying buried at the bottom of the Indian Ocean. The Indian won't like to be so closely connected with the Negroes, although directly concerned are the Dravidians of the South. The northern Indians are the stoutest protagonists of the cult of Aryanism. It is such a misfortune that they are so brown—often to the extent of blackness! Yet, they are so very convinced that their

ancestors came from Central Asia and were white as snow. The tropical sun is to blame. What a shock it will be to find out that the movement was from the contrary direction! But that would be still more glorious—India would be the cradle of humanity as well as civilisation. Trust nationalism to compose history with utter disregard for historical facts! They can never realise the truism that tenacity of belief is no test for accuracy. It is all a matter of inferiority complex. Nationalism is a Freudian phenomenon.

Talking of Freudian phenomena, I remember that I had a remarkable dream the other day. I seldom dream—except of the day variety, and even that not very often. Realist! I still retain the designation, although it brought me misfortune. Well, about the dream. It was about our reunion—but can you imagine, where? You cannot! In Ethiopia—as guests of the Negus! Now—how should one interpret such a crazy dream? Freud fails here. I cannot trace it to any inhibition. Besides, inhibitions are supposed to take vengeance—as dislike for pickled onions! Isn't that so? I believe, this particular dislike is the proof that one has a suppressed desire to run away with his neighbour's wife. Anyhow, there I saw ourselves very vividly, in that place never thought of. Of course, Ethiopia has been lately more or less in everybody's mind, and presumably has sunk down in the subconscious. But how could I subconsciously have the remotest desire to go there—I cannot imagine. Moreover, except as an ugly symptom of a deep-seated disease, this African escapade of Mussolini does not disturb my peace of mind any too much. Certainly not to the extent of arousing the subconscious quixotism of playing Byron for the home of another old civilisation—rather barbarism. It does not make

a ghost of difference whether the poor Abyssinians are "civilised" by the twentieth century Caesar on the model of the real ones of old, or they are barbarised by the descendants of the paramours of the Queen of Sheba. Their goose is cooked, anyhow. They are caught between the devil of "civilisation" and the deep sea of barbarism. Left to themselves, they might prefer the quiet of the deep sea—sheer force of habit. Just as in India, we are regaled with the puzzling spectacle of Oxford graduates shouting "Mahatma Gandhi ki-jai!"—a cry back to the wilderness of an idealised past. I should like to put these chaps in the "ideal" conditions of village life, and force them to practise the simplicity of going without a full meal even once in a month. The world is so full of idiots, imbeciles, humbugs and hypocrites. It is distressing.

However, I would not mind if the dream was somehow realised. The joy of it would easily eclipse the little shadow of Ethiopia and its sorrows, which may after all be a blessing in disguise. The Negus was very gallant, to some annoyance, naturally, of his plump Empress. It is really strange, the dream, I mean. Even if I ever have a dream, I never remember its contents. Only a vague recollection lingers that I had one. But this one left such a vivid picture, including the architecture of the palace, the appointment of the rooms, etc., and specially all about the movements of the centre of attraction which, of course, was the lady from Paris, as if she was a special envoy from the enigmatic Monsieur Laval, who is edifying the mystified world with the successful diplomatic feat of riding two horses to the detriment of Abyssinia and prostitution of the fraudulent institution of Geneva. And well, you might be such a mysterious Matahari, with your newly acquired liaison with Monsieur le Prefect of Paris.

The uncle of the very cultured young lady is not Chiappe. by any chance? Is it? He is no longer the Prefect; but after the momentary disgrace, he has risen a step higher. So, the liaison might be highly respectable, in any case,—running up to the late lamented Stavisky! Do write what you think of my dream!

Just now, I have plenty of books. I ordered some scientific stuff directly. It took long to get them. But finally I have practically all I need immediately for my work which, by the way, is progressing well, so as to make up for the lapse during the last winter and summer. It has swelled up to something much bigger than planned. I am still working on the book, a synopsis of which I sent last year from Almorah. Its scope has widened so much that the title will have to be changed to something more comprehensive, such as "Philosophy, Religion and Science". The chapter on "The Philosophical Consequences of Modern Science" has grown into a large size book of ten chapters. The entire book has to be perhaps in three volumes, or broken up into three different books belonging to one series. It seems that I have fallen into the latest fashionable habit of writing trilogies.

How is the weather in Paris? The winter must be showing its ugly teeth already. Here we are having splendid weather. But the winter will be rather of the Parisian kind—it rains lots. But I shall get through this last lapse, however it may be. Just now my chrysanthemums are blooming—heaps of them. They are not of a very good variety, rather small. But the colour, mostly yellow, is gorgeous.

I am anxious to have some news from the friends. Of course, nothing particular can be expected, and generally I have patched up a fairly complete picture from bits of

news picked up from the available newspapers and periodicals. It is not a very bad picture. There is reason to be satisfied, but not too optimistic. As regards the Bandit, he merely acted as the gramophone, and shall speak a different language any time he is told to do so. The system is vicious.

It is really distressing how mean the people are,—to take hated enemies in brotherly embrace, and treat old friends and tried treasures as untouchable. I am afraid there will be more bitter experience before the lesson is learned. How does Willy speak to you so frankly? Don't worry as regards the future. We shall see.

The sick lady's husband¹ was in London and has returned. It would be interesting if you met him. I don't think he went to Paris, though.

Another year gone. It will be five years in another four days since we parted, and less than a year separates us. This is a perspective to be cheerful about, although there are so many things which are painful. But life is what it is. To make the best of it, is our task. We possess the surest means, by which life can be made beautiful in the midst of all its cruelties and ugliness.

*District Jail, Dehra Dun,
December 21, 1935.*

STILL another year gone, nearly. More than five years! It is difficult to believe. In spite of all that happened meanwhile, time has certainly flown away. But now I am having a strange experience,—a new angle on the metaphysical problem of time. Each single day passes by as quick as ever, like telegraph poles watched from an express train. This, by the way, is not mine—Shaw.

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru.

But together, they seem to move rather slowly. Months, though composed of no more days than before, seem to last much longer now. One may suspect that I am having an experience of "cosmic boredom". Do you know what that is? It is a graphic statement of the apparently self-contradictory physical fact that time passes more slowly for bodies moving with greater speed. How can I have the experience, which is possible only when one moves with a velocity approximating that of light? But there is a very simple explanation of the experience. As long as I counted time in terms of years, months took care of themselves. Now that I am counting them, they insist on making their reality evident and felt. Let them have their reality! It would be excusable even if they were a bit vindictive in asserting it. Philosophers treated time rather disrespectfully. We should make amends for the extravagance of our spiritual progenitors, and be tolerant with the vagaries of time, not of the legendary Father Time. Him we shall conquer, to some extent, at any rate. We are not going to be old at his arbitrary or conventional bidding, before we feel like it. I shall surely not be defrauded of these five years by the old despot. I propose to be as young, or no older, at the end of these years than I was when suddenly put in this backwater of the current of life.

I am extremely interested with what you wrote about your juvenile literary venture. Cannot you possibly recover those letters? You can certainly locate the theological dentist, unless she has progressed further towards the truth of her Christian God, and joined some nunnery. Your definition of philosophy was not very far wide off the mark, particularly when the philosophy concerned was German metaphysics. Kant, however, is certainly not

the worst of the lot. Lately, I have been occupying myself a bit with "Kant Studien". No fear of Neo-Kantian deviation! The study has been in connection with the new-fangled "mind-stuff" theory which is supposed to result from modern physical research, particularly of atomic (quantum) physics, as a substitute for the concept of material substance. I have shown that there is nothing new in this new-fangled theory. Of course, it does not result from the revolution in the concept of substance brought about by Quantum Mechanics. It is an echo of Kant's *a priori*-ism or Leibniz's Monadism, mixed up with Berkeleyan Subjective Idealism. "Kant Studien" was necessary to show up Kant against Kant; that the refutation of the modern mind-stuff theory can be found even in the positive elements of Kant's Empiricism.

I still do think that you suffer from a propensity to self-effacement. Besides, you know that the traditional kaiserliche conception of woman lingers in the subconscious mind of not a few of our friends, I mean, generally. I was often surprised by the discovery in utterly unexpected places. Somebody once called me more European than the Europeans, because of my impatience with feudalism atavisms in persons least suspected of such a disease. Have you ever noticed how distressingly *Spiesser* (*petit-bourgeois* in the cultural sense) our friends as a rule are in personal life? You must have! The characteristic is so outstanding. There is some advantage of being a direct descendant of feudal culture. I am one, and I feel the advantage. It is easy to bury the past when it is dead beyond repair. A mere skeleton in the cupboard can be easily dragged out, and thrown rattling out of the window. But a culture, still living and very much kicking, is a different matter. You must kill it before you can bury

it. And you know, intellectual thrusts don't penetrate the subconscious where the traditional *Frau* is lodged, endowed with her three "K"—the gift of the Kaiser, not a modern one, but way back in the days when Siegfrieds had overwhelmed the Kriemhildas, and gallant Rolands had developed the custom of putting the virtue of their beloved under lock and key, while away on the crusades to storm the Islamic Heavens for the sake of the Houris. Jealousy is the emotional reflex of possessiveness, and the modern man wants to possess his mate with no less zeal than his mediaeval ancestors. He does not challenge the poacher to a duel, although there are bloody fools who do open a dramatic offensive with the weapon of a coffee pot or bottles of nice wine!! But the pain, often suffered with demonstration, results from wounded pride. To lose the property and to hold that it was too good for you, that you lost it because you did not deserve it—that is too much to stomach. This is by way of casual observation on a complicated subject of psycho-analytical study.

How selfishness is mixed up with love! If it were only disinterested selfishness, free from the mean sense of possession. Selfishness by itself is unavoidable. It is the most fundamental property of our very being. We cannot possibly be, and not be selfish; that is, be conscious of our selves. To talk of selflessness, is the acme of hypocrisy. As if one could live after committing suicide! Those who preach this virtue, of course, seldom practise it, because if they did, there would be an end to their tiresome preaching.

What you reported about your conversation with Willy (Muenzenberg) is really unbelievable. How can people be so mean! They have no reason to be vindictive. I am glad to hear of the optimism on the part of Heinz and

August. It requires great courage of conviction to remain optimistic in an atmosphere of mean intrigues. Ask Willy what he proposes to do with the shares you own? Is he prepared to take them over as a fair deal, or plans to depress them through underhand manipulation of the market? He would be in a rather awkward position if you asked him the question directly. I presume he knows about your holdings, and these must be also under his jurisdiction, if he has been given the general receivership—entrusted with the liquidation of embarrassing liabilities. The prevailing meanness is really depressing. It may compel me to make a radical change in the plan of our future, which would then include only you and me—let the world go to the dogs! Only, one cannot really run away from the world, except in a flight of romanticism, and neither you nor myself possess the aptitude for such self-deception.

I wonder if you thought of reminding Jay about the *Physical Review* containing Einstein's latest paper. I am very eager to have it. Generally, I have plenty of literature for the time being. Only in course of my work, occasionally I feel the need of something special. But the gaps can be left to be filled in when I am out. Lately, I have been thinking of copying out a chapter of the book and sent it to you. That would mean extra work. The chapters are quite long,—hundred pages on the average. Yet, any one chapter would give a fair idea of the whole work, and may help pre-arrangement for publication. As regards publication, while I would prefer to arrange it in this country, there may be difficulties owing to the size of the book. The publisher would be required to put in a lot of capital in a book which, owing to its nature, will have a limited market. Therefore, a more practical

plan will be to break up the work in two books—one containing parts written particularly for the Indian reader, and the other with the parts of general interest.

It is nice that you met the medical attendant of the sick lady; the gentleman himself¹ must have been in Paris also, and surely called on you. Personally, he is extremely decent. I call him a good man fallen among thieves, and he half agrees. Has sentimental scruples, you know.

District Jail, Dehra Dun,
January 21, 1936.

HAPPY New Year—and it is going to be really happy; though by the time we shall actually have the happiness, it will be rather advanced in age. I am not concerned with the flow of time, which flows anyway, but with a particular event in time. That event makes this year happier than any other, and events depend on beings. My world of great expectations remains intact, and is coming closer, in physical time, as every day of this happy new year is lost in the past of sorrow and suffering. Now that it is no longer a matter of years, months have become of supreme importance. The approaching triumph over time makes me disregard the problem of space. Once I am free to move, geographical distance, however great, will be covered in no time. This being a leap-year, one of us will find no difficulty in leaping over the sea of space. In our age of marvellous mechanical transportation, that is no problem. We can confidently hope to take the last hurdle of technical difficulties, somehow or other.

Most probably, barring the intervention of some force majeure beyond our control, the task of negotiating the

¹ The reference is to Dr. Atal and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru respectively.

geographical distance will be your share, in addition to the equal share of the all but complete triumph over time. To hear me talk glibly of triumph over time, one would think that we have conquered death, as it were. We have, in a sense. Haven't we? The world will never know that—the great truth of life which we have experienced, and have made our own for good. Am I a blatant egoist, or naive optimist? Anyhow, it is heavenly to feel like this, and any feeling is a reality, so long as it is felt; and I do feel it.

After five years and more, I shall be stepping out in a rather new world. I cannot be quite sure about it, in more than one way. As a matter of fact, it will be my return to this country after twenty years! I must have a little time to adjust myself, physically (in the general sense), with the new environment. With all my impatience to wipe out as soon as possible the dark period which began on November 24, 1930, I would rather live through the short period of uncertainty alone. I am sure it will be very short. Content with this much about the future, let us live in the present.

While you have been having such a wet and stormy winter, I have had it much easier this year. It has actually been comfortable, considering the conditions I am in. There has been very little rain, and only a few cloudy days. What has been welcome for me personally, is alarming for those outside. The unusually dry winter will harm the crops. But inscrutable are the ways of God! One could almost maintain that he is intervening to end the economic depression, the cause of which, in so far as this country is concerned, is exclusively the agricultural crisis. Of course, the causal relation is really a double-edged sword. A draught in this country, or a flood,

may have the same effect, as the agricultural part of Roosevelt's New Deal. It will force agricultural prices up by reducing production. On the face of it, the perspective seems to be rosy, and should be welcomed prayerfully. But given its real causes, even the almighty God will be no more successful in ending the depression than the worldly powers that be. With prices rising as the result of a crop failure, the peasants will get more for what they will sell, but they will have less to sell. Consequently, their total purchasing power will hardly increase; and the bulk of consumers in this country is the peasantry. The saying that 'Prolong the Chinaman's shirt-tail by a few inches, and the textile production of the world will have to be doubled', is equally applicable to this country. Only, the great majority do not have on their back the shirt to be hypothetically prolonged. And our saintly deliverer has set before us the holy ideal of loin cloth and of voluntary poverty. Instead of increasing the minimum requirement of cloth, the Indian peasants should do with less, if the Mahatma had his way. Fortunately, the apostles of God cannot perform miracles which are beyond even His Omnipotence.

While mentioning our Mahatma, I must tell you something amusing, though it is *a propos* a very serious problem,—the problem of the rapidly growing population of poor countries. Mrs. Sanger is visiting this country, trying to carry her message to the Indian mothers, whose prolificness is so great that the population of this country has grown by about thirty millions in ten years, notwithstanding the fact that more than half of the new-born leave their mother's womb reluctantly, and refuse to remain in this world longer than a few days. Yesterday I read an interview between the crusader of birth-control

and our Mahatma who, by the way, is ready with a definite opinion on every controversial subject. Considering his saintliness and doctrine of celibacy, (though he did not practise the virtue himself—and yet is a Mahatma, which shows that celibacy is not a necessary condition for saintliness), one should expect him to plead ignorance about the intimate relations of married life associated with the question of motherhood. But no! As a Mahatma, he is omniscient, and ideologically omnipotent in this country, inasmuch as everything he says has the force of gospel. He flabbergasted his visitor by the emphatic declaration that he knew women as well as herself, having discussed intimate matters with hundreds of thousands! Then he laid down the law: the alternative to contraceptive measures is for married women to desist from the enjoyment of sexual intercourse. He claims to have given this advice to women, who sought his counsel, as the only moral way to avoid undesirable motherhood. But so far, there is nothing new. The Mahatma's view on the question was known. Moreover, since the doctrine of non-violence does not give him the opportunity of finding in war the solution of the problem of surplus population, he is compelled to tolerate some restriction on motherhood, although such tolerance is not strictly in accordance with his religious and moral views. The joke, then, is that the flabbergasted Margaret, in reporting the interview, pointed out not only the disastrous consequences that Mahatma's advice would be sure to have on married life and home; she also mentioned the internal fallacy of Mahatma's logic—that the ideal of Indian womanhood is to worship at the altar of the husband. Incidentally, to support her well-known point of view, Mrs. Sanger had to go into some detail about the sexual element in love

etc. Most of those details were suppressed by the editor of the English paper (owned and edited by Englishmen) which published the interview! Of course, no Indian paper would publish it, since it is critical about the views of the Mahatma. Even those who disagree with the Mahatma politically, from the Right, are ardent admirers of his religious, ethical and social views. The intellectual stagnation of this country is incredible. Progressive ideas are at a heavy discount. Indian society is still living in the fifteenth century. All our problems are bred in that cesspool of social stagnation.

It appears that the sick lady's husband did not come your way when he was expected. But he may still go, now that she is over the crisis again. She is simply dragging on a miserable existence which causes misery to others as well. What could she do? Here we are up against an old ethical prejudice. Why should not the end be hastened when it is only a matter of time, which can bring only more suffering? Fortunately, the medical profession is finding the courage to rise against the prejudice, and a growing number of its members are giving an affirmative answer to the painful question.

Where is H. now? What is she doing? Has she also turned out to be a loafer? But a child of Neukoelln (proletarian suburb of Berlin) could hardly have that misfortune. Let her not lay much stock on her Lochimver and his heavy Buick. Loafing is an agreeable, though rather demoralising pursuit. There are sure to be competitors,—specially with all those oriental luxuries dangling before the starved hankering for nice things. Well, it is foolish to moralise. Only, if I had power, I would remember Koba's¹ famous remonstrance to an amorous apparatchik

¹ Stalin's nickname.

(party official): "I don't want to interfere in other people's personal affairs; but if I hear more talk about women, you shall go where there is not a single skirt in sight!" You see, after all, I still remain a personal admirer of my ex-friend, who used to pride over our racial affinity, and called me "gold". Now, he won't appreciate me even as copper! But I have the weakness of giving the devil his due. And in my account, his due is very considerable. I was publicly castigated for this weakness once,—at Weimar.

District Jail, Dehra Dun,

February 24, 1936.

It is a pity that the anxiously awaited interview² (or should it be called a meeting) gave so scant satisfaction. To tell the truth, I had not expected that anything more concrete would result. "Great men", when they are not really great, (and when they are so, they seldom acquire the recognition), are uncertain quantities. But uncertain quantities and variables cannot be kept out of the equations of the mathematics of life, though this is not pure, but only applied mathematics. But don't feel disheartened or slighted. As a matter of fact, he was not able to give you what you sought for. If you cast a retrospective glance on the events of the last five years, it would be clear to you, why. Then, the element of strangeness might have affected the situation. Anyhow, it is unnecessary for me to console you after such a long time. I am sure you have got over any disagreeable reaction that you might have had temporarily. The experience has afforded you and other friends an insight into the problem I have to

² During his visit to Paris, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had a meeting with the Communist Opposition leaders.

tackle. It cannot be simply set aside. There are those who have preferred the line of least resistance, which has brought them nowhere. You have seen the best aspect of the problem. Now, the whole complex can be easily imagined. There are such currents and cross-currents as to make the situation very bewildering. To find a successful solution of the problem, it is necessary to choose the most hopeful line of approach. I am simply acting on this principle. The same old dictum: Be realist! But sometimes it is difficult to stick to the principle. Pseudo-great men are a tiresome lot. Conceit, covered by false modesty, is an incurable disease. And when the disease is made into a virtue, and applauded as such even by those who are expected to know better, the problem becomes baffling. I am always remembering a remark Heinz made while trying to persuade me to give up my decision (to return to India). It was a very wise remark, indicating instinctive sagacity. It was instinctive, because he did not have sufficient information to ground it on. He sort of felt it, and he was right. Yet, I don't repent disregarding his wisdom. Of course, at that time I did not even recognise it as such. The deficiency¹ he pointed out has to be removed. That was sufficient reason for the step I took. I am confident of the result.

As a matter of fact, I am rather homesick for Europe. It would be such a fun to be together in Paris, and there

¹ When in 1930 I decided to return to India, all my friends abroad were opposed to the idea. The most vehement opponent was the veteran German Communist leader Heinrich Brandler. He was of the opinion that, with all its apparent sweepingness, the mass movement in India was very immature, and nothing could be achieved before some solid foundation was laid through quiet preparatory work.

does not seem to be any immediate danger of De La Roque spoiling the fun. I believe that the French *spiesser* would not prove so gullible as their Teutonic cousins. Besides, there are other factors which were criminally destroyed in Germany, to make Hitler's march to power easy. Only he did not march, but was kicked up to it. If it depended on his courage, he would never be there. And he is certainly grateful, if not anything else. Was not the blood purge a splendid act of gratitude?

It is evening, and I am writing with a little charcoal fire in my room to keep warm. Generally, fire is no longer necessary. The winter is gone, and the summer is in the offing. We have no spring in this country. The change from cold to heat is sudden. But since yesterday, the weather has been cloudy, and to-day we are having spring rain, accompanied by a rather strong wind, which blowing from the mountains, brings along a chilly touch of snow. Hence the charcoal fire. By the beginning of March, the summer will be again on us, and we shall complain of heat instead of cold. A poor man's life is a continuous complaint. Particularly this country is ugly for the poor, however beautiful it may be for the rich, who can move back and forth from the hills to the plains, as the weather changes. Poverty makes life ugly, and life leaves its mark on nature marring her beauty. In this country, you cannot simply have a comfortable living arrangement which is available only to the rich, and most of them don't have the aesthetic sense to make life beautiful.

As regards the old question: When?—it may be the end of September, if not even earlier, if some very reasonable hope is permitted to enter into pure mathematics. In any case, a month more or less should not bother us, when we have seen more than five years through. The

fact is that we are nearing the journey's end. That is a cheering enough perspective, despite all other troubles and tribulations, of which there are plenty.

Now something nice. I do have a new cat! I was going to write to you about it this time. I have had it for a couple of months already. It is not so very nice looking as the one in Bareilly, but much more friendly and playful. Just now, it is lying asleep on the mat at my feet, near the fire, having had a disagreeable experience. Had to go out in the rain to ease itself. Cats hate water, you know. It's a tom cat—still a kitten, but showing the first signs of manhood, change of the timbre of voice, for example. In two months, it has grown three times as large as it was when it came—then a miserable, repulsively ugly little thing, hungry and shivering. Now that is all changed. Marked grey and brown, like a little leopard, it does not look so bad. Its eyes are like those of the Japanese heroes on the stage. Have you ever seen them in pictures? Hideous, and the manner of their acting!

I am pulling on. The old aches and pains are not so troublesome just now; but lately I have had a rather bad soreness in the waist, particularly in the renal region. It is really bad sometimes. Well, I shall require a thorough overhauling when I am out. Outwardly, if you want to know, I have not changed so very much. I don't know if that is a correct statement. What I mean is that I don't feel any older, though Father Time has stamped his foot-prints on my physical being. For example, I have lost quite a lot of hair. The top of the cranium has become rather thinly populated. But it is not the kind of baldness which gives one the distinguished appearance of intellectualism. The contents of my cerebral cortex, assuming there is any

(I mean contents), are still fairly hidden under a sufficiently thick chevril thatching. The next item in the list of Father Time's marks is that the remainder of my hair is getting fairly sprinkled with grey—silver threads among iron—not gold! I cannot even announce the fact of my getting into respectable middle-age in poetical language, because iron does not rhyme with old, as gold does. So, you must brace up to receive the bad and sad news in its unmitigated starkness. Moreover, I have lost three of my teeth—all unnecessarily. There was nothing radically wrong with them. Good dentists could set them right. But in my present condition, I had to have them out, since that was the only remedy for continuous pain. However, the loss is neither serious nor noticeable. They were all the so-called wisdom teeth, which are of little practical importance. Only, I hope, to lose them does not imply a proportional loss of wisdom! I can ill afford to lose three quarters of my stock of it which, I am afraid, is rather meagre. But I don't place a high value on wisdom, with a mythical quality, invented with the purpose of making a virtue out of ignorance. The praise of wisdom is usually associated with depreciation of knowledge. Otherwise, my physical appearance has not changed much. With all the tiredness etc.—the effect of five years of this life—I certainly do not feel the burden of my forty years. There you have plenty of silly details!

My main complaint is want of sufficient fresh air and exercise. In this place, I can hardly move about; the compound is so very small. Naturally, I long for the time when we shall take long walks in fresh air either on the mountains or by the seaside. I won't force you to give up your preference for the latter. I have no particular aversion for the sea. Only I hate long sea voyages. They

are so dull. Just now, there is no flower of any kind in my little box. They all died in the winter. Summer is the season for jasmines. I shall try to have some planted. You can have no idea of tropical jasmine. They are snow-white and have a very strong scent, considered too strong by those not accustomed to them. Curiously, the aesthetic sense of the tropical people, concerning flowers at any rate, is olphatic. Flowers are appreciated not by colour or shape, but only by smell. Even the most beautiful looking flowers are disparaged if they have no smell. They are compared with "beauty without virtue". The philosophical implication of this sense of value is subordination of aesthetics to ethics. The answer to the question—how Gandhi with his queer notions wields such a tremendous influence on the Indian people—is to be found in this cultural tradition, which again has its roots in the social conditions of the past. Love of beauty is a crime. In order to be appreciated, beauty must have a content of virtue. What is virtue? Ah, that's a question which cannot have a uniform answer! Feudal culture has its answer, and the East with its "spiritual" view of life, still holds on to that slavish, enslaving, notion of virtue. It is a notion that kills the spirit of man. Nothing has been so antagonistic to spiritual development, towards eventual emancipation of man, than the spiritualist philosophy, if that can be called a philosophy. That is an irony of history.

I am hungry for some good music. All I can have now is funeral marches played occasionally in a churchyard nearby. The other day, a funeral procession passed by playing Mendelssohn's march. It was a military funeral; a regimental band was playing, and doing rather well, except for the drum which was not sufficiently

muffled. There is beauty even in death. It must be a pleasant sensation if the dying feels like hearing Mendelssohn's Funeral March. Which is better, Haendels'? I am no judge. Only, I like and enjoy good music. I believe it is one of the things I like most. Bring some good records along with the gramophone! Really good ones will not be easily available in this country—Beethoven's symphonies, for example; or Debussy's "Thais", tempting that idiotic monk down the pole!

It's a pity that August's projected American lecture tour did not materialise. But I wonder if that would have done much good, except the possible financial gain. Anyhow, he must be disappointed. Depression seems to have caused an intellectual stir in that country. I wonder if the much needed shake-up of our intellectual stagnation will come from across the Atlantic. They are certainly making some valuable contributions to literature. There are significant currents of philosophical thought also; Professor Sellar's *Philosophy of Physical Realism*, for example, is very interesting. Then, there is C. E. Strong's *Revised Pantheism*, which, as he himself declares, is a re-statement of Materialism. I am just reading Pearl Buck's *Chinese Trilogy*. It is certainly the best book on the subject written for a long time, and is bound to be counted among the best works of this generation. It is really splendid. Our Marxist Pandits might learn plenty from it, if they only had the required modesty.

*District Jail, Dehra Dun,
March 22, 1936.*

By the middle of February, the winter was over here. Since then, there has been struggle between summer and spring. It has been a rather feeble effort on the part of

the latter, which has a very small place in the scheme of Indian weather. Yet, until now it has not been bad, bright warm sun in the day, nights being pleasantly cool. But don't have illusions. The sun can be very cruel, no less so than the wintry rains of Paris. This is not at all a pleasant land to live in, except for the idle rich; and it is certainly not beautiful. Indeed, it is full of sordidness. Of course, one can idealise everything, and romanticism is a cheap sentiment which defies reason. But I am a realist, and to a realist eye, this country is overburdened with filth, poverty and ignorance. It is really a depressing problem; and the worst of it is that there are a blessed few among our would-be saviours who realise the magnitude and nature of the problem, although they are sure to solve it all by the wave of some magic wand, once they are given the chance. They would, however, make a worse mess of it if they are ever given the chance, which they will never have because of their phenomenal ineptitude and monumental ignorance. You have seen by far the very best of the lot. So, you can easily imagine the rest of the crew.

The idea about an Institute of Social Research is splendid. Very valuable work could be done through the aid of an Institute like that. But who is running the Frankfurt Institute now? You wrote last year that Pollock went to America. Has he come back? Not that I expect him to have the imagination necessary to realise the far-reaching importance of such a venture. And Weil? Well, I should be very pleased if they could be persuaded to help the establishment of an Indian Branch. But I believe the persuading will have to be done by Heinz and August, if they still possess the old influence over Weil. However, on hearing from you, I shall send a message

for the present head of the Institute. I don't think that it will be possible for the Indian Branch, supposing it will be undertaken, to be affiliated with any University. Not in the beginning, at any rate. But we can easily secure the co-operation of some distinguished professors. The difficulty is about money. It will not be available from any Indian source. The principal work of the Institute must be the production of literature. That will mean a publishing department. I wrote you already about my plan of founding a publishing house as the centre of an intellectual movement. That is the main thing I shall undertake on my release. Therefore, please go ahead with the task of persuading the Institute people to back up the plan. Indeed, in this country, we must work rather on the line of the Malik Verlag than the Institute. The cry is—Light, and more Light!

Personally, I have developed the mood for scientific work. If I carry on my present plan, several years must be put in. The main work is still to be written. I mean, the critical history of Indian culture in general, and the treatise on Hindu Philosophy, particularly. So far, I have accomplished only the preparatory part of the undertaking. The books already done will create the atmosphere, in which criticism is appreciated. For the present, Indian intellectuals are suffering from an inferiority complex. They have neither the critical spirit of science, nor any sense of humour. Social research and reconstruction of history are done with the purpose of depicting the imaginary Golden Age, not that of Jean Jacques. Indian Golden Age was not an Arcadia. It is believed to have been a sort of antedated modern civilisation. What a humbug!

I do not know how far I shall be able to continue the scientific work. Certainly, it could be done more metho-

dically in Europe than in this country. But even out of these walls, I shall not be the master of my movements. Very likely I shall not be given the passport to go abroad. In addition to other considerations, which are weighty enough, the *force majeure* is the decisive factor that will determine my future abode. I shall certainly want to visit Europe sooner or later. Must see old friends again. But when that will be, that remains on the lap of God. Meanwhile, we shall adjust ourselves to emergency conditions, hoping to make the best of them. Plan as much as you will and can, with that perspective. Only, don't be romantic! You will be disappointed with this land of fable. It is so very different in reality; the difference in modes of living is vast. I don't want to depress you; but you must have a clear perspective of the situation. Life is much simpler in Europe. That is an amazing assertion. But it is true.

As regards books, I have got a fairly representative collection. Most of them were ordered directly from here. Some came from America also. Of those reported to have been sent by Jay I received only one lot of four or five. The rest are still missing. I did get the news about the arrival of a second lot of six or seven. But they never reached any closer to me—strange! But that's the fact. I have plenty of reason to be disgusted with this blessed country, and shake its sacred dust off my feet, and go somewhere else—to Spain, Mexico, South Sea Islands. But I cannot resist the temptation of having another go at it, before leaving it for good, and to the tender mercies of the gods.

The above are about all the scientific literature I ever got from abroad, except those from yourself directly. However, I have provided myself with practically all that

I need for the moment. For the future, once I am out, it will not be necessary to buy all the books. Then I shall be able to use public libraries. There are only one or two things I am very eager to get without delay, and they are not available through the booksellers of this country. The most important is Einstein's latest extension of the United Field Theory, which he has worked out at Princeton in collaboration with young Dr. Rosen. Last summer, it was published in the journal of the American Physical Society. Of course, even for this I can wait. But I am eaten up with curiosity. The reason is this. I have made the bold and unorthodox suggestion that the difficulties (about the problems of substance and causality) raised by the latest theories of Quantum Physics, particularly Wave Mechanics and Heisenberg's Doctrine of Uncertainty, will be eventually cleared up by the application of the physical principle of Relativity to microcosmic events. Indeed, I have gone farther—to the extent of showing that the uncertainty of electronic movement is really a matter of epistemological relativity, and that the apparently antithetical concepts of wave and particle are reconciled in a relativist view of the structure of the substratum of the physical world. Of course, there is nothing new in all this. The results of Dirac's research, divested of their abstract mathematical form, clearly indicate to this direction. Even Eddington has suggested that the Cosmic Constant may turn out to be the most fundamental physical category. Nevertheless, the mode is to regard Quantum Physics as scientific *fin de siècle*, and relegate Relativity to the limbo of classical theories. My contention is, and the support for it is found in the scientific views of neo-mystics like Eddington as well as in the works of Dirac, that the Theory of Relativity takes us deeper into the structure of nature

than the quantum Theory ; the former is a universal principle, whereas the latter deals with a particular problem. In other words, Relativity is a philosophical principle, representing the sum total of scientific knowledge—new as well as classical. In his latest extension of the United Field Theory, Einstein calls the Quantum Theory “incomplete”, implying thereby that it will be covered by the extension of the principle of Relativity. Thus, in the full text of the new extension, I expect to find concrete physical support for the philosophical view I have tentatively suggested. Hence my curiosity, and I daresay it is pardonable.

How nice that you have got all the books of Galsworthy together. Yes, he is my favourite. In fiction, I seem to have an old-fashioned taste. Galsworthy and Hardy are my favourites ; of the moderns, Sinclair Lewis ; and now I have a new love, Pearl Buck. Don't be alarmed, it is purely literary, and she is old enough to be my mother, although, having divorced her priestly husband, she lately married her publisher.

By the way, this reminds me of the fate of my own China book. The German edition, thanks to Adolf, was a miserable miscarriage.¹ I am afraid that experience might prejudice the success of your plan in connection with the Institute for Social Research.² However, I am not so easily defeated. The book must be published again. It is a good work, and prophetic. In a previous letter, I mentioned the

¹ It was published just before the Nazis came to power in Germany. My publisher was on the “Black List”, and the firm was raided. The stock of my book was taken away and burned together with the rest.

² My book on China was written under the auspices of the Institute for Social Research attached to the University of Frankfurt.

possible places where the original English manuscript could be found. As the last resort, it must be translated from the German. I hope some copies of the German edition escaped the historic bonfire of Berlin.

I am afraid that the first part of this letter is rather gloomy. Since the day before yesterday, I had a bad attack of indigestion,—a strange experience for me. Indigestion makes one gloomy. However, let me make amends. I slept a little better last night, and am feeling more cheerful this morning. Consequently, I am full of plans, too. My first thought is about the gramophone. We must have that, wherever we are. Bring plenty of records! I suggested some in my last letter. But our "Der Tag" still remains as uncertain as ever, and I am getting pessimistic. It may not be until the very end of the year. If my very legitimate hope was fulfilled, that is to say, if I was granted remission due to any common criminal, I should be released in another six months at the very latest. As a matter of fact, it might be only four months. But I am giving up even such a very legitimate hope, and preparing for the worst. That means, October or even November.

You will find the Indian summer very trying. There is sun and sun. The brightest sun of Europe does not give any idea of tropical heat. Of course, there are beautiful summer resorts in this country. But they are paradise for the rich—lost to the poor, to be regained. Ordinary mountainous regions, I mean, where there are no modern resorts, are not easily accessible, and lack all amenities of civilised life. Anyhow, we will find some place, and be happy. But not being romantic, I cannot say that we will be happy anywhere. One simply cannot be happy anywhere. Happiness does not come from the soul. It is a product of physical conditions, including the minds and

their bodies seeking happiness. Emile and Sophie are children of Jean Jacques' perverse imagination. Placed in conditions of poverty, squalour and misery, even most devoted lovers are sure to get on each other's nerves. There is so little love in the world, because there is so much of physical discomfort. It is nonsense to maintain that there is no difference between a pleasant home and a dingy room. I am all for comfort and beauty. Too much hardship makes one bitter, and bitterness upsets intellectual balance. Ugliness deadens the soul. There can be no ideal for the unimaginative. Men without an ideal are animals. Does it sound like a relapse into Idealism? It is not. An ideal of life is something different from "The Idea". But why should I tell you all these commonplaces? Take it as fire-side chat over *Asti Spumanti*. Oh! even some cold beer would be so nice just now.

Another six months or more. I should count eight. I am sorry to disappoint you. But the world is cruel. How can the ordinary fairness be denied? Well, there we are,—helpless. However, it is a matter of a few months, after all. What's that, after this long, long ordeal?

The political atmosphere of Europe seems to be getting more and more charged. Adolf's last move might have precipitated the fatal blow to the shaken fabric of peace. But the crisis seems to be over, for the moment. How long will it continue in this precarious way? That is the question. It seems that "Western stability" is going to be secured, but by throwing Russia to the wolves. Germany has made her demand clear. "Drang nach Osten"; and at the other end, there is a "Drang nach Westen". Something more than Abyssinia is to be looted. Can the Western Powers and America sanction that loot, and save Western civilisation? Nazi paganism and Japanese feu-

dalism together will surely throw the "achievements of the nineteenth century" into the flames of neo-barbarism; and Indian nationalism is ready with its "spiritual message" to the world. The message is: endorsement of both the forms of crass Materialism. The world is gone crazy. Still we hear from unexpected quarters that friends of peace are stronger today than ever. Let us hope it is not an illusion. I don't want the world to go up into flames, before I come out, and before you are away from the storm centre.

District Jail, Dehra Dun,

April 22, 1936.

THE summer has officially begun. The Government offices are going up the hills. Consequently, all routine works are delayed,—including our correspondence. Life is so full of complications!

By the way, did you explore the possibility of acquiring French citizenship by birth-right so that you may shake off the long-distance allegiance to Uncle Sam? It is such an absurd idea that, for the mere technicality of having your passport renewed, you should have to go all the way across the Atlantic. I am sure that it will not be necessary. Europe is full of expatriate Americans, who have been away for ages. They say that birth-right is "inalienable". It is a wonderful term, made popular by the prophets of the eighteenth century. The political jargon of this country, which is still to have its Enlightenment, to live through the experience of the eighteenth century, is full of "inalienable rights". It sounds so funny. As if anything ever was really inalienable! Illusions—fictions! If freedom is inalienable, how do people happen to be done out of it? Those who have lost

it, or have never had it, insist that it is their "inalienable birth-right"! The logic is rather shaky, to say the least. You are actually born without a thing, which is supposed or believed to be yours by the right of birth! Curious. It is a moot point of jurisprudence, which should be placed before the august tribunal at Den Haag, assuming that it will survive Adolf's offensive.

These must be extremely exciting, hectic days in France,—having a general election under the ominous shadow of Prussian militarism reborn. But if they would stop to think, the shadow is cast on the opposite direction. France is not menaced. I believe the rulers of the glorious Third Republic are not blind to the reality of the foreign policy of the triumphant Third Reich. There will be no war on the Rhine, not in the near future at any rate. Of course, there always remains the possibility of some contingent event putting the fat on fire. But the premeditated plan is to make a Western combination against the East. The success of the diplomatic moves made from Wilhelmstrasse will depend to a great extent on the result of the French general election. It seems practically certain that the *Front Populaire* will win. That will be some guarantee against the immediate execution of the nefarious scheme. But the question is: How long will the front last? The Japs, on the other side, seem to be confident of definite developments in Europe in the near future. They must have got the tip from their Western ally. Well, it is a critical moment. In Europe, people are sitting on the top of a powder magazine. The other day, old Lloyd George described the situation very graphically. Fortunately, no sane man in any sane country wants a war. Only, can they fight against fate?

From my side, I am still unable to give a definite

answer to your anxious question—When? I have been making some efforts to make sure; but until now with no encouraging result. The position still remains the same—a question of months instead of years; and we should not be disheartened if it turns out to be more months than we hoped.

Lately, I have been developing a strong inclination towards a retired life, devoted to scientific work, for sometime at any rate. Should this temptation really overwhelm my better judgment, (I mean, in the practical sense), then I would certainly go abroad. And with old Europe going up in flames, America might be the only place to go. But don't take this seriously. It is a matter of mood, not of careful consideration. But meanwhile, I must confess to my having this curious mood of subjectivism. I cannot shake it off. To be more definite in my confession, I feel very bitter, full of grievances, complaining of the treatment I have been receiving from all sides. I am annoyed with myself for having these feelings, although cannot deny the fact that they are well founded. Even then, one must not be perturbed by the pettiness of the world. My thoughts, however, are more complicated, and how I wish to unburden my soul! There are many things which cannot be written. Some day, we shall discuss the question which is troubling me. It is a problem which is interwoven into our pattern of life. Yet, it cannot be satisfactorily solved without disturbing that pattern. You can easily imagine the disturbing nature of the problem. Can one be completely objective? Ever since I learned to think for myself, I have had no doubt about it. Naturally, I am distressed to find myself deviating towards subjectivism. Don't be alarmed. It is not as bad as all that. It is a matter of mood, and will pass away. But

while it lasts, it is a botheration. You know I don't like to shirk any problem. I want to face squarely every problem that confronts me, and have always believed in my ability to think it out. Therefore, it is rather annoying to be faced with a problem, the solution of which appears to demand some modification of my general philosophy of life. Call it a spiritual crisis, if you please. But rest assured that I shall survive it. Only, it seems that I must have actual contact with the realities of life for that purpose.

The question which bothers me is: Can one be entirely disinterested personally in the outcome of his efforts made as a member of the collectivity? I always thought that one could. This conviction appears to be shaken. I don't like the perspective. Because I am proud of this conviction, and naturally want to defend it. Just when I should be happy to see the promising sprouting of seeds laboriously sown in an inhospitable field, where for years I ploughed a lone furrow, I am feeling frustrated. There is perversity in this unreasonable mood. It is the hidden desire to have one's services recognised. I am distressed by this revelation. It makes me cynical. Once upon a time, some smart Alec coined the epigram—"Mediocrity is the basis of popularity". Though you cannot deny that there is a large grain of truth in the epigram, its cynicism is repulsive. Curiously, now I am beginning to see that the grain of truth is much larger than I would once concede. You see the menace to my purely objective theory of leadership? Indeed, I can no longer ignore the fact that to mislead is also to lead, and that great leaders, acclaimed as such, are in a great majority of cases, misleaders. But the logical consequence of this view would contradict the view of historical necessity. It would even fit in with

Adolf's brazen theory that the masses must be deceived. But there is a different side of the picture ; and I hope to find a solution of the problem which will reinforce my conviction. There is the powerful weapon of Dialectics. These nasty things are facts. But historical developments are ultimately determined by other facts which are more fundamental. The persistent desire for personal gratification may be drowned in the realisation of those facts.

I am afraid this is all very mystifying. Let us defer the discussion to a more propitious occasion. Meanwhile, I must struggle with my mood as best as I can. I should not have mentioned it at all. However, it is done. I hope you won't be disillusioned. Every god has his clay feet ; otherwise, he won't be a god !

The weather has been rather kind this year. Throughout March it rained off and on. So, the temperature kept down. But finally the summer has come with all its glory. Soon it will be difficult to do anything strenuous in the evening. In my tiny room, surrounded so close by high outer walls, it is very stuffy. One cannot do anything but perspire, and feel miserable. The worst part is the closing hours of the day. It does not get dark until 7-30. It will be half an hour later still. But I am locked up at six. It is very disagreeable to be locked up like an animal, while the sun still blazes. Even my cat resents it, and stays out, although I know he would like to come and sit on my books. That is his favourite place. Presumably, he thinks that to read or write is a waste of time. Lately, he has been having his own troubles—the crisis of adolescence. In the spring, he grew up and wanted a mate. Moped about crying. But where to find ? This is the eternal problem of the prisoner's life. Fortunately, he is not

quite a prisoner. There is nothing to keep him in jail except the knowledge that he gets fed here, and a liking for me which he has developed on that very solid foundation. So, when he felt the irresistible urge of realising his cathood, he dashed out into the world. Now he is happy again—in his solitariness. Possibly, he did not let love prevail over regular feed. That might be the reason for his return. But I don't think that it is altogether that. Certainty of food is not the main concern of his life. He does not hesitate to sacrifice food for freedom. He does not like to stay locked up in this box of mine in the night, when he prefers to roam freely all over the jail. Since he insists on his nightly outings, I feed him before it is time for him to go out. But it does go out without food, when I forget. This evening, for example, he has gone while I have been writing. Now he cannot come back until the morning when the door of my box will be opened—for a moment.

I have received a number of books. Mostly novels of not very good quality. However, they will be a welcome change from highbrow stuff like *Anthony Adverse* which I have been reading of late. I don't think much of this "great modern classic". It is tiresome. I am afraid my taste in fiction is plebeian—incurably so. I certainly am not capable of enjoying beautiful forms thoroughly empty of contents. *Anthony Adverse* is a typical example of this species of "pure art". A thousand and more pages of close print with so little in it—and whatever is there is mysticism. Confusion and enigma! Of course, it is beautifully written, but language is supposed to convey thought. It cannot have an aesthetic value by itself. You cannot enjoy reading a skilfully framed sentence like you enjoy seeing a beautiful wreath of flowers. Literature

differs from other branches of art—painting and sculpture, for example—in that it must have a content as well as form. Therefore, good poetry is such a very rare thing.

Among the books newly received there is a small Sorbonne publication which must have come from you. I am glad to get it. There are some other good things in the series, and cheap too. I shall mention a few which you might send. 1. De Broglie, *Conséquences de la Relativité dans le Développement de la Mécanique Ondulatoire*; 2. André Georges, *Mécanique Quantique et Causalité*; 3. De Broglie, *Théorie de la Quantification dans la Nouvelle Mécanique*. These all belong to the series *Exposés de Philosophie des Sciences*, published under De Broglie's direction. By the way, I am curious about the socio-political attitude of this man. He is a prince. Does he belong to L'Action Française or to the Camelots du Roi? That would be a curious phenomenon, baffling for the "Philosophie des Sciences". He is certainly a revolutionary in the field of science. I am convinced that he would survive Heisenberg, for example. I wonder if sufficient attention is being given to the philosophical implications of Wave Mechanics. Since the Theory of Relativity, no other single result of physical research has had such a profound philosophical consequence as De Broglie's dual conception of matter. The synthesis of wave and particle is really an epoch-making contribution to scientific knowledge. A proper appreciation of this fundamental fact shows how ridiculous is all this pother Eddington and company are making on the strength of Heisenberg's principle, which is nothing more than a case of epistemological uncertainty. That is easily explained by the philosophical implication of the Physical Principle of Relativity. Send me some works by Langevin, particularly, the one

on Determinism and Relativity. He might remember meeting me in 1925.

Your letter has not returned from the pilgrimage as yet. I am afraid it is caught in the process of shift. In that case, it may be delayed still some days. So, I must send off mine today. The same fate may be awaiting it also.¹ Having seen for more than a year that our correspondence is purely "domestic", does not contain anything objectionable, the authorities might relax the control and spare us this additional bit of anxious waiting. However, in another few months, we shall no more live on a strictly limited and rigidly controlled dole of letters. We shall have freedom of communication and of association! How shall we celebrate the new found freedom? Let us have it first—then we shall see.

District Jail, Dehra Dun,

May 24, 1936.

EVEN this month I am not in a position to give any definite answer to the question, when? I did hope to know something more definite by this time; but still the situation remains the same—question of months instead of years! I expected to be, and should have been, released by the middle of July. By that time, I shall have served a term longer than which no well-behaved prisoner with a six years sentence need actually put in. And I have been an exceptionally well-behaved prisoner, and frankly characterised as such by my keepers, who all along promised to see that I need not serve longer than absolutely necessary. But when the day of reckoning came, it happened that I must serve five or six months longer than

¹ All my letters were sent to be censored at the C.I.D. head office at Allahabad.

any criminal in my place and with my record would be required to. This is not very fair. Is it? When the prospect of getting the fullest reward for my recognised "good behaviour" seemed absent, I naturally hoped for the next best. The most minimum amount of fairness done to me, I should be released by the end of August. For that much I did hope confidently. In view of that, I gave the vague hint in one of my recent letters. I myself have been clinging to that hope, which of late is turning out to be also forlorn, and the prospect of release is receding as far back as the end of November. But my patience is getting exhausted. Nothing can stand endless strain. I might not be able to keep my record of a well-behaved prisoner intact, although, if I did anything to protest against this grossly unfair treatment, that would not be misbehaving, either morally or legally. Even a prisoner has some rights. Besides, I have taken, and shall take, all possible steps open to me before I do anything drastic. So, I shall be fulfilling all the conditions laid down by those who keep me in prison. Yet, the consequence may be to make my position worse. Even the minimum remission granted to me may be forfeited on the least pretext, so that I shall be released a year later than the next November. But I shall not be there to be subjected to that coercion. I still hold on to my penological principle that more than five years in jail, particularly, for those who are not brutalised criminals, is worse than death. I am not going to suffer more than five years of this living death. To be released from prison is beyond my power. But to shuffle off the mortal coil is not. This is not written in a mood of depression, but with determination, and in order to let the world know. No other channel is open to me. To be deprived of what is guaranteed to any

prisoner, because I am neither a murderer nor a robber nor a thief!—it is scandalous. Intolerable arbitrariness! No man with self-respect could or should submit to it.

Now let us talk of other things. Again your letter is late,—not in coming, but in returning, (from the C.I.D. office). It may come tomorrow, I am hoping. One learns to hope in a helpless situation. It is a strange experience to live in a great expectation, and it is a cruel blow to have it go farther, the nearer you come to it. Again returning to the mutton! Damn it! I am getting morbid. Heavens, no! I am as sane and sound as ever, and want to continue to be so still for years.

The picture of a place with “ice and fan” is too tempting to be trifled with. Only, let the picture be appetising as well as cooling, by making it iced beer in the place of simple ice! I am a thinking machine; but I do not let one end of the charter of manhood—the perpendicular vertebra—get the better of the other. I think it is your favourite Frazer (I am also an admirer of the iconoclastic and *unanstaendige* Knight Errant) who wrote that the consummation of humanhood (this term must be put into use to liquidate the tradition of manly egoism) was the enjoyment of the possibilities of both the poles of the central column of our physical being. The Greeks came nearest to the ideal; and we have had our days of Homeric laughter, which will never be forgotten, and are sure to be lived again. You see, the cloudiness of the immediate future does not make me any less confident about the longer perspective.

Your encounter with the neurasthenic lady in the Café is intriguing. How do you think she hit on the long voyage. Bless her for the other part of the prediction—

that it would be an immense success. As regards the boy reading your palm in the Berlin restaurant, that was simple shyness on his part. He had his eyes open and told what he saw. He had been with us in the excursion to that place near Potsdam, and was having his own romance with blonde Emmy. By the way, I am very sorry for her. This reminds me of what you wrote, *a propos* her position, "not as blackmail." I take that not as blackmail, but as a straightforward declaration of independence.

There is little chance of my getting out of prison to run into some girl, whom I shall find "much nicer and more attractive". Not many are likely to wait outside the gate. On the whole, there is not a surfeit of these seductive creatures in the world. Particularly in this country, they are in great demand—those going about freely, to be run into, being very few. Besides, I shall be otherwise occupied.

It is a relief to know that your passport business is settled, at least for the time being. Who knows what will happen after a year. Under the ensuing regime of the Front Populaire, you might get your birth-right of French citizenship. Declare your devotion to the Third Republic; patriotism has become a Marxist virtue! I wonder how much of the amazing result of the elections in France is due to the return to the phraseology of the *Grande Revolution*. Did they sing *La Marseillaise*? For music that would be a change for the better. However, I hope they did not go beyond *Ca ira*! The poster *Contre Ca* was good. The gods must be rather embarrassed by the unexpected victory. Only, will they never realise whose victory it is? Having won a victory, in spite of themselves, they may not be sure of what to do with it. Are we going

to see Thorez calling at the Elysee?¹ That would finally destroy the legend of '23. Thorez used to be a *brave garçon*. But I suppose he is thoroughly spoiled by now. Doriot seems to be going to the dogs. In an American periodical, I read some extracts of his speech in the Parliament in connection with the ratification of the Franco-Soviet Pact. If the report was correct, he made a nasty speech. It sounded like Sneevliet,—full of hatred and bitterness. Of course, Doriot has more than enough reason to be bitter. Others have, too. But one must not lose balance. I am afraid he is losing it. That would be a great pity. I am very fond of him. He is one of the old friends I shall go a long way to meet again. Well, the currents and cross-currents of reality are beyond our power to control. But I cannot help holding the gods, particularly the minor ones, responsible for driving good men to despair. Criminal waste!

Oh, there are more disgusting things than can be digested except by those with very tough stomachs. I have nearly got over the "spiritual crisis". It was silly to write about it. I should be ashamed. But I am not writing an autobiography, and so need not be careful about what I say. As regards things in this country, you should have noticed that there is too much talk. Although even talk is something, it often has a misleading effect. I am worried on that score. There is not enough control and guidance. Given that, things may shape properly.

I wrote about *Anthony Adverse* last month. The other book, *Forty Days of Musadagh* is also one of the latest sensations. The author is German. It is a story of the Armenians resisting massacre by the Turks during the

¹ Maurice Thorez was the General Secretary of the Communist Party of France.

war. It is described as a classic. I have not read it yet. I hope I shall not be disappointed as I often am by these much talked of pieces of modern literature. I am glad that you enjoyed Galsworthy. Did you read *Swan Song*? How did you like *Fleur*? Should I be condemned as a bourgeois if I found in her the nearest, but still far removed, approach to my ideal?

There is one thing I want very eagerly. It is another new paper by Einstein,—Physics and Reality,—published in the journal of the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia, March issue. I never got the paper published last year,—the newest version of the United Field Theory. It is very distressing. I want these things so very much. Just now, I have been occupied with the epistemological consequences of the Theory of Relativity. Einstein's new paper seems to back up some of my ideas. Therefore it would be so very useful for developing them. However, the finishing touches must wait till I am better situated. Meanwhile, I am doing whatever is possible and am satisfied with the result,—some sound philosophical stuff.

Did you take up the matter with the Frankfurt Institute people? I mean, the proposition of their considering an Indian branch, or affiliate. It would certainly be very useful if they could be persuaded to back up the project. It would help me greatly to continue the scientific work, to which I shall most probably devote myself largely, for some time at any rate. I want the things I have done to be published in this country. Some help from the Institute in that respect would be very welcome. Of course, the main work I have done is not strictly sociological. But it lays down for this country the philosophical foundation which is the condition for the sort of sociological research

the Institute encourages. For the absence of guiding philosophical principles, sociological research in this country has amounted to a glorification of the past, which precludes a critical approach to the realities of the present, and consequently blocks the road to the future. Moreover, once I have done with my present work, I shall myself take up the more directly sociological work—the critical history of Indian philosophy. Much preparatory work for it was done already in the earlier days of my imprisonment. So, my proposition is quite in line with the programme of the Institute. I suppose Felix is still the man to decide. It should be possible to manage him, unless he has in the meantime, found the grain trade with Odessa more profitable than with Buenos Aires.

I am intrigued by your remark about Clemens. I did not know that he had become a man of so much consequence that his pronouncements should be taken for “key noting”, as the Americans say. His brother is, of course, an entirely different man. I have been disappointed in him also. He has more stuff in him than he dares to show. Under some evil genius, he has developed a surprising spinelessness. As regards Clemens, he is not to be taken seriously, in any case. Trust him never to do his own thinking, and say anything original. You would say, exactly that’s the type of man in demand in these days. I know, unfortunately, it is so. In your part of the world, the all-inclusiveness seems to be running amuck; in this country, however, infantilism is still in vogue, with dashes of incongruous opportunism, futile because it lacks conviction. The mess is not cleared, waiting for the merciless broom of Mars. And that seems to be coming like the inevitable *denouement* of Greek tragedy, notwithstanding the curious pheno-

menon of the bedevilled world asking Hitler to show the way to peace!

Let the accursed world prepare the stage for the Dionysian dance of the War God, and us return to domesticity. My little *ménage* is broken up. My cat rebelled against captivity, and deserted me. In his nocturnal excursions outside my little box, he had celebrated his maturity by slaughtering two of four kittens—a new acquisition to the jail. He was determined to finish the job so auspiciously begun. But I stopped his murderous venture by depriving him of his nightly freedom. He was mad. Early one morning, he found an opportunity to escape, and made straight for the remaining two kittens. But some prisoners had assumed the responsibility of protecting the little ones. They caught the would-be murderer and gave him a severe beating, and drove him outside the jail. There he remained for days, mortally afraid of venturing in again. I was told that he was quite happy in the world at large, and resisted all attempts to be brought back. I thought he preferred freedom to home comforts, and wrote him off the *ménage*, though I must confess, not without a little sadness. Now the prodigal has returned! Yesterday, he was carried in a sack, all scared to death of being beaten again. Instead of killing a calf, rather not being in the position to do so, I welcomed the wild prodigal with a cup of milk. Before his experiment with mass murder and freedom, he used to scorn milk—a strange thing for a cat to do. Now he fell upon it, as if it were a lump of juicy raw meat—his favourite fare. Freedom did not feed him. He has become thin and dirty. But after all, it was not freedom that lured him away from the comforts of home. He was driven out, and stayed away for fear. All the freedom he cared for was to exercise his god-given

birth-right,—to kill small kittens! I believe that that freedom he still hankers for. But fortunately, the kittens, in the meantime, are getting beyond the age, in which they can be legitimately killed by a tom cat, quite in accordance with feline ethics.

That's all the news of any particular interest about my *ménage*. There are no flowers; only new plants which will blossom in two months. The rains have come much earlier this year; so we had only a short spell of scorching heat. The current variety, however, is more disagreeable,—damp, muggy, sticky. But after a shower, it always gets sufficiently cool for some hours. That is something. On the whole, the summer is more tolerable this year. Consequently, I am not feeling particularly worse off, and expect to come out eventually still sufficiently sound, notwithstanding my nearing the wrong side of forty. Then, life will begin again. Meanwhile, I hear that your letter has come. What luck! God is merciful—even to the unbeliever. Only, he is rather niggardly about it.

District Jail, Dehra Dun,
June 20, 1936.

IN another month, I shall complete five years of this life; and it is practically certain that the end will be still several months off. I am still of the opinion that death is no worse than more than five years of living death. But there are temptations which weaken one's resolve. Nevertheless, what I wrote in my last letter stands. Since then, I have put the matter up to the Government. Not that I expect any favour. Only, it is so obviously a question of fairness, about which one hears so very much, that I have decided to press it just for the fun of it. Failing to get an answer acceding to my legitimate demand to be releas-

ed, when I shall be due in ordinary course, set by laws not of my making, I shall take further steps. There should be an answer by the end of the month. Should the answer be negative, the next move from my side would be made by the time this letter will reach you. As a matter of fact, if I was not scandalously compelled to serve longer than a common criminal in my position, I should be out just about the time you will get this letter, namely on July 8. On that day, I shall complete four and a half year (not counting the six months undertrial), more than which one with my sentence need not actually put in, provided that his jail record recommends him for the consideration. My jail record is entirely favourable. That is why it is so maddening to be forced to pay more than contracted for. But there are other things which contribute to my present protesting mood. They are connected with the "spiritual problem" I already mentioned. Indeed, they are troubling me more profoundly than the prospect of a few months more, though this also is having its effect on my present mood.

I suppose you have managed to grasp the nature of the problem. I wrote rather enigmatically, and shall not attempt to throw any more light on it through this utterly inadequate means. But, as I made it clear in the last letter, it has lost its personal complexion, and has taken the shape of an interesting philosophical problem, entirely different from those I have been occupied with these years. Because, it opens up an entirely new field of investigation—social psychology, to give a name provisionally. I keep it out of mind except in idle moments. Mixed drink is delightful as a real drink—but metaphorically, it is extremely confusing. I do not want to make a philosophical bowle (by the way, do you remember

that famous mixed drink of my making?). The question that is puzzling me is born of personal experience, not of myself alone; so, it must be thoroughly discussed. And there will be great difficulty. It is a question of such personal nature as has until now been confined to autobiographical literature. On the other hand, this much is already clear to me: that the solution will not come from self-analysis which, of course, will have its place in the scheme, but from a critical understanding of such phenomena as popularity, success, recognition, etc. I wonder if you know that I had a very definite philosophy on these matters. I believe once I did write a few words about it in connection with the Lion (Trotzky). I am finding it difficult to live up to my philosophy,—in my own consciousness which, after all, is the highest tribunal. That is the crux of the problem. Apart from the fact, that I have no time just now, to go into the matter systematically, the trouble is that there is no established method for the investigation of such obscure questions of social psychology. Until now, they have been treated autobiographically.

I consider autobiography very unreliable as a source of objective truth. It is practically certain that nobody can ever write the truth and nothing but the truth about his or her intimate experience. I really don't understand why intelligent people rush to compose autobiographies. That itself is a matter of psycho-analytical study. Biography is a different proposition; but self-composed biography? Well, with due deference to the honesty of the authors, I remain sceptical about the historical authenticity and psychological value of their work, which may be otherwise meritorious—as literature. It is not a question of honesty or integrity. It is the great "Unconscious". Who

could ever be free from the dictations of the Freudian God? Indeed, I dare express the iconoclastic opinion that to write autobiography is worshipping in the temple of that deity. Even the most truthful man packs his autobiography unconsciously with lies. Otherwise, the venture could not be rationally explained. One able to think, able to express his thoughts, with something of value to add to the common stock of cultural attainments, can easily find so many other subjects to write about, without the handicap that one must feel while composing an autobiography. To talk about oneself? Well, it is a matter of taste, I suppose.

Now, that was neither here nor there. I am sure you will be more mystified than illuminated. But I did not propose to illuminate. How could I, while the matter remains so obscure to myself? We shall discuss it when that could be done more frankly and fruitfully—soon, let us hope. How soon? Where? The same old questions, so very conducive to speculation! Soon—somewhere—that much is sure.

It may be difficult for me to join you, if I decide to do so, towards which course I sometimes feel very much inclined, lately. A practical expression of my spiritual problem. The inclination to let the world go to the dogs. But I have taken notice of your reflections on this point, and find myself in agreement. Only, the damned thing may really belong there. In any case, it will surely land there if it goes on as it is doing. Sounds pessimistic, doesn't it? With such bulwarks of order and security as the "Versailles Dispensation" discarded with the connivance of its defenders, and the League licked by Musso, again assisted by loyal members of that pompous institution, how can one be optimistic, unless hope is sought in

a solution, the sympathy for which lands one in jail for years, while the jailors themselves are preparing for an orgy of violence which, if not prevented, (and there is only one way) will take us all to the dogs or the devil.

Generally, I have been rather lazy these days, mainly due to the weather. The rains came rather early this year. So, the fierce heat did not last long. But the current kind is not preferable. It is very distasteful to be pickled in perspiration day and night, specially when change of clothes is limited to one, and there is not enough soap to wash them frequently. If that is somehow managed, the clothes get worn out and that is a calamity. They are tolerable only when sufficiently old, getting rather whitish, and somewhat softened by age. New, they are simply impossible, the feel as well as the looks. So, I hang on to the rags as long as they give any service. That is a bit of domestic atmosphere. One gets used to anything.

If some stable arrangement could be made (about the publication of my book), I would be almost prepared to spend the next five years in pure scientific work—to finish what I have begun; and that programme would naturally include a more or less prolonged visit to Europe. There is an inducement for Heinz and August! If they really want to have me there in the near future, let them get after Weil. I can give the assurance that it would be a very useful undertaking, and I shall put in some solid work—perhaps that would be my lasting contribution! The rest seems to be so evanescent. Nor will there be anything more pressing or practical to do in the near future. I am reconciled to a long perspective. Heinz was quite correct in his judgment of the situation in this country. The judgment still holds. The situation is indeed very immature. No useful purpose will be served by my joining the

halluballoo or paying over and over again a fancy price for moral assets of dubious value. Moral assets! All rot, in this immoral world. Next time we find ourselves in a delightful music room, we shall not build castles in the air of the future, but live in the present! How would you like to have a "Robin Hill" of ours? That's exactly my present mood. But my father did not have the good sense of trading in tea; instead, he spent his life in teaching Sanskrit to would-be clerks or prospective lawyers. Consequently, here we are where we are!

I just finished the chapter on the Theory of Knowledge. It is about fifty thousand words. Spent nearly two months writing it. Am I getting slow? As I mentioned already, I have been rather lazy of late. Sometimes did not write a word for days. But unfortunately, it is not the enjoyable sort of laziness. No fun in being. . . .

The last sentence on the previous page remains incomplete. I have already handed in those pages, so that they could pass through the local control, while I am writing the remaining pages. The arrangement is for assuring that the letter goes off tomorrow, so as to catch the Saturday's airmail, having in the meantime made the journey, there and back, to the higher censor.

The temptations weakening my resolution, mentioned already, are greatly increased by your letter, which pictures the future in such vivid colours of realism—with just a slight shade of romanticism. I want to say a few words, provisionally, about other things. So, let me conclude this topic with the reassurance that I don't lose my soberness so easily. Even my indignation will be soberly expressed.

Your remark about "the problem" (you see, it has ceased to be my problem, and has become one of many problems to be solved, and I wish to contribute to its

solution) will give me much food for serious thought. Yet, waiting sometimes becomes the only sensible way, though I would not call it the "cleverest way," particularly when you have the satisfaction—the point is the ability to have the satisfaction—of seeing the realisation of what you strove for. I was disturbed, because, for a time, I felt as if I did not possess the ability as much as I would. That feeling is gone. I have the ability. The rest is a matter of dispassionate study, critique and—waiting.

District Jail, Dehra Dun,

July 20, 1936.

AT last, I am in a position to answer the old question—When? Only, the answer will not be very cheering. There remain another four months still. Unless something unexpected happens, one way or the other (there is not much chance, though), I shall be released about this time in November. Four months more than I was ever prepared to stand this sort of life! But your letter has destroyed all my determination. Tomorrow, I shall complete five years in jail.

Your message reached me at last,—the one sent personally, so many months ago. After nearly two years, I had an interview yesterday, the first one since I was at Almorah, and that was in summer 1934. The messenger¹ was at nearby hill-station for a short rest about a month ago. The possibility of his delivering the message personally was, of course, out of the question. He charged a local friend with the task. The friend being a prominent citizen—chairman of the local municipality—managed to get the permission for the interview. He will see me regularly for the remaining months.

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru.

In addition to what I wrote, in previous letters, I wish some preliminary arrangements done for the publication of my book before you leave Europe. Next month I shall send some more materials about the contents of the book. The people who have published August's *Dialectic Materialism* (English edition) may take up the thing, it being on the same line. I am very glad that August's book has been published in English. It is certainly the best popular treatise on the subject. It will be extremely useful in this country, for example. The concluding chapter of my book will be on this subject. It is not yet actually written, though all planned in detail. As a matter of fact, it is being constructed in my mind out of the conclusions drawn step by step from the exposition of the philosophical significance of the different branches of science, and the critique of contemporary philosophical views which are supposed to result from modern scientific theories. I would want so very much to discuss with August a whole series of conclusions which may appear to be not quite orthodox. But they are logically unavoidable. Though the charge of Pragmatism is over-done, yet I think it should be made more effectively than hitherto done with gestures of contempt and impatience. However justified these may be, they do not carry much weight with those who are still to be convinced of the correctness of our philosophy. I have laid particular stress on this point, and have found it necessary to criticise the all too prominent tendency to catholic conformity. We must have the courage to admit that the last word was not said nearly a century ago, and to realise that certain points may require revision or elaboration or re-formulation, in the light of the advance of science, on which the fundamental principles of our philosophy rest. We should remember what Engels

said in his Critique of Duehring, when he castigated the latter for shaping a rounded up system of philosophy. The "system-shaping" he so severely condemned has become a virtue with the orthodox of our time. Emphasis on the doctrine has all but set aside the method. Yet, the latter is the strongest weapon of our philosophy. It enables us to develop our doctrines continuously, thus demonstrating that a synthesis of all the branches of knowledge is possible only in the framework of a philosophy which is not a closed system, and is equipped with a methodology which can logically co-ordinate apparent contradictions. I am almost prepared to say that Marxism is not a body of doctrines, but a system of method. As regards the contents, I am of the opinion that, without abandoning the fundamental principles in the least, it is possible to give up certain concepts. Instead of insisting on terms, we should stand by their contents, and thus place ourselves beyond the charge of dogmatism. Those not blinded by stupid orthodoxy, must see that the content of the concept of matter has been found to be very different from the traditional notion. In consequence, a strict adherence to the term involves us in a dispute very largely verbal; and a great deal of confusion results from that. We must waste so much time in defining terms. Why insist on sticking to old terms, when a profound revolution in the nature of their content has rendered old concepts meaningless and misleading? I have come to the conclusion that our philosophy could be, and should be, re-defined as "Physical Realism". Of course, the classical nomenclature need not be discarded. But instead of justifying it by an untenable defence of the old concept of matter, we might more profitably state in a descriptive term what is the essential principle of our view of the

world. I am of the opinion that the term "Physical Realism" is more appropriate for the philosophy which can co-ordinate the entire body of modern scientific knowledge into a logical system, knowing no finality. And that is the essence of Materialism. As long as the essence is clearly grasped, and developed strictly according to original principles, the name can be so extended as to obviate the misleading implication.

The adjective "dialectic" does not quite serve the purpose of meeting the situation created by the undeniable revolution in the concept of substance. It lays emphasis on the methodological aspect, and as such it is very appropriate. But the question remains: What is matter? It has been defined over and over again (I have myself added one) until there is nothing in common between the new contents and the old concept. Yet, the association cannot be forgotten. Therefore, I suggest giving up patching the old concept with new definitions, and the adoption of a more appropriate term—for the purpose of explanation. If we stick stubbornly to the concept of matter, and are not prepared to modify it in the light of modern scientific research, as our philosophy compels us to do, it becomes very difficult to dispute the logical plausibility of Pantheism, for example. We should not place ourselves on such a slippery ground. Spinoza was good enough as a counter-blast to Monadism, or to the idealistic miscarriage of Cartesian Rationalism. But today we can hardly raise the flag of "Back to Spinoza!" Yet, unless we can take courage in both hands, and declare that our philosophy does not stand or fall by the concept of matter, we shall come dangerously near "beseelte Materie", or lay ourselves legitimately open to the charge of dogmatism.

I am a stern critic of the "mind stuff" theory. I have torn it to bits. Nor does Heisenberg's Neo-Kantianism (I wonder if it is realised that his suggestion is to revive Kantian epistemology) bewilder me. But the fact remains that the disappearance of the distinction between mass and energy demands of philosophy a new definition of objective reality, such as may embrace both. The old definition, "matter is that which objectively exists", simply begs the question. Moreover, it leads us to dangerous grounds. Other people's minds are parts of the world which exists objectively for me; and mine stands in the same relation to them. We cannot very well go back to the stupidity of Buechner, and define mind as a secretion of matter. That leaves us holding the baby—an objective mind. What are we going to do with it? If we cannot find a better way out, Pantheism lies ahead.

It has rained much more than usual. So, I have not suffered much from heat. But it may still come back for a time. Even now, as soon as the sun is out, it gets nasty—muggy heat. It will be nice and cool soon. My box is full of flowers again. Those from the last year—of all colours. I tried to do some Mendelian experiment. But you cannot do much without a microscope. Yet, I have succeeded in bringing out this year more flowers of a peculiar shade of red.

District Jail, Dehra Dun,

August 23, 1936.

STILL three months. I wish there was some sense in the philosophy which denies the reality of time. Those old grey-beards were never in prison or away from where they longed to be. If they had the experience, they won't talk such nonsense.

Since you are preparing the synopsis of my book, I shall send the additional material. But it is difficult to convey any more detailed idea than done in my previous letter. Even a fairly full synopsis would be more voluminous than could be easily incorporated in one letter. Then, the question of structure still remains open: Should it be one book in three volumes, or three separate books? The skeleton sent from Almorah covers the whole scheme. But in consequence of the writing done since, the section on the philosophical consequences of modern science has grown into a whole book of large size (about thousand printed pages). For a year or so, I have been working exclusively on that. I believe, the table of contents of this part of the work was incorporated in one of my previous letters. I shall, therefore, only add something about that.

The original plan was that the chapters on biology and psychology would be only a sort of appendices to reinforce the philosophical consequences drawn mainly from the physical sciences. Now, as you shall notice, in the table of contents, the chapter preceding the really concluding chapter on dialectic materialism is on the Theory of Knowledge. In a way, that is the crucial part of the whole investigation. All the philosophical questions raised by modern physical research are ultimately epistemological. Therefore, I had to go into this old problem of philosophy rather deeply. That made me realise the necessity of drawing upon the findings of modern psychology, and you cannot give an intelligible account of psychological theories except on the background of a comprehensive statement of the results of modern biological research, with special attention to the achievements of cerebral physiology and genetics. So, the structure of the book has been changed. The chapters on biology and psychology are placed before

that on dialectic materialism, and have assumed as much importance as those on physical science.

I shall just mention the main contents of those chapters: Biology—1. Post-Darwinian development in general biological research; how far Darwinian views require modification (exhaustive examination of the various critiques of Darwinism leads me to the conclusion that essentially it stands as firm as ever; the Einstein of biology is still to come; and my contention is that even in physics the new theories do not contradict the classical views); it is shown that Mutation, Mendelian Law and Weismann's theory can be all reconciled with the general Principles of Descent, Origin of Species and Natural Selection (any modification necessary concerns mostly the latter); 2. Origin of Life; Spontaneous generation; defect of the old theory; modern critique; answer thereto; experimental data (bacteriology, bio-chemistry, etc.); 3. Nature of Life; evidence of organic chemistry (synthetic carbon and protein); 4. Vitalism versus Mechanism; review of neo-vitalist theories (Wolf's Epigenesis, Neo-Lamarquism, Bergson's *Elan Vital*, Driesch's *Entelechy*, synthetic biology); critique of Vitalism; 5. Emergent Evolution; does not contradict the mechanistic view; 6. Determinism; its specific form in living nature; non-vitalist teleology (Haldane, Jennings, etc.); the idea of the whole (*Gestalt*) does not involve purposiveness; function appears in biology as purpose; 7. Latest experimental facts (particularly of genetics); the problem of "organising activity"; way to its solution; 8. Consciousness and mind.

That leads over to psychology; 1. Scope of psychology: subject matter; ambiguity of the concept represented by the term "psyche"; 2. Speculative nature of the eighteenth

century rationalist school ; 3. Defects of analytical psychology ; 4. How psychology became a science ; 5. Origin of mind ; 6. Empirical evidence of mental activity ; 7. Behaviourism : its defects ; mind is a reality ; it is identical with cerebral physiology ; 8. Conditioned reflex ; 9. Psychoanalysis : What is unconscious mind ? Answer in the light of the anatomy of the brain ; 10. Ideas and emotions ; 11. McDougall alone defends teleology ; criticism of his views ; 12. Free Will and Determinism ; can be reconciled only on the basis of materialistic Monism or Physical Realism ; ethical objections to Determinism not valid ; Free Will incompatible with the teleological view ; ambiguity of the doctrine ; how far and in what respect will can be free ; that kind of freedom is not denied by Determinism.

That is a very rough sketch. I am just working on the chapter on psychology. Therefore, the account of its structure could not be more concrete and systematic. But it will give the general idea. The treatment will be more thorough than suggested by the above skeleton. The chapter on biology is finished, to my complete satisfaction. And that has reinforced the philosophical conclusions indicated in my last letter. But they could be more carefully formulated to avoid the cry of "revisionism." Indeed, it will be nothing of the kind. Only, we must have a living philosophy, and growth is the essence of life. I am curious to know what August thinks of my "heresy". It would certainly be very useful to have personal discussions.-

A publishing house on the lines of the Malik Verlag will prove to be a very profitable business in this country. Take for instance August's book on Dialectical Materialism. A cheap Indian edition (in English) would have a

large sale. Similar arrangements can be made for other publications—scientific as well as fiction. Then, of course, there shall be production of original stuff. There are young writers with a socially progressive tendency, who can be encouraged profitably. Modern Indian fiction will have a world market. As a matter of fact, some excellent pieces of Indian literature remain unknown to the world which is fed on stale stuff. There is developing a literature which is no longer limited by mysticism and romanticism, believed to be typical of India. I have read some really good things written by young women. Naturally, the new literature raises the standard of social revolt and cultural renaissance. Consequently, it is still overwhelmed by the nationalist claptrap and reactionary romaniticism. Given encouragement through the intermediary of an organised body, the movement will grow powerful with consequences of great importance.

Very soon, I shall review the world more freely. Already, I am no longer so cut off. Of late, a daily paper is supplied to me. So, now I can follow from day to day the general march of events. The Spanish drama, for example, is awfully exciting. But curiously enough, the cabled news did not give the personal composition of the Front Populaire Cabinet, except mentioning the inclusion of three women. I have read some alarming news about Doriot. Who is this "dissident" (Communist) reported to have joined the Cabinet. I have always had a great sympathy for Irene (Curie)¹, though never met her. The result of her recent scientific research (done in collaboration with her husband), for which they got the Nobel Prize, was very useful for my work. The demonstration of the mutual

¹ She was included in the first Popular Front Government of Leon Blum

convertibility of mass and energy is a landmark in scientific literature. With other facts (origin of the cosmic ray, for example) it enables philosophy to refute decisively the doctrine of scientific creation, based on the second Law of Thermo-Dynamics. This has been a bugbear ever since the days of Kelvin. Eddington has made a big splash with it. I have gone into the matter in great detail, and believe to have made a convincing case. In that connection, I have ventured some speculation which requires a reference to Einstein. Because, it is a deduction from his conception of the Finite but Unbounded Space. As far as I know, none has thought the matter out in that direction, although in my opinion it is clearly indicated by the apparently paradoxical concept, interpreted in the light of the revised formula setting forth Einstein's Laws of Gravitation. In short, the concept so interpreted makes infinity (spatial) conceivable, even measurable, dialectically. That is my position. If infinity ceases to be a metaphysical abstraction, the finiteness of mass must go, because space is not an empty void, but filled with "something". Mass being convertible into energy, the spectre of Thermo-dynamic equilibrium is laid. The mechanistic view triumphs in cosmology. The cosmic mechanism does not require a *deus ex machina* to wind it up.

District Jail, Dehra Dun,
September 24, 1936.

THIS is my turn to write from bed. I was down with 'flu'—not a slight touch this time, but the real thing. It was physically impossible to write any earlier. Even now, you hardly be able to decipher this scrawl. Ordinarily, these last days do not fly so quickly as they did when there were thousands of them to pass. They become end-

less, when one has to lie in the none too comfortable bed, with clothes sticky and smelly, because the change is limited, staring at the ugly ceiling of the mean little room, or looking out of the window, at the red brickwall which stands forbiddingly only three feet away. The nights when I had high fever were dreadful. Fortunately, there were not many of them. Well, it is nearly over. I am feeling much better, but still very shaky. Under the given conditions, I am afraid it will not be easy to recover soon. To be sick in jail, is like being in hell. One leads a dog's life. However you may feel, bang! goes the door with two stout locks, and for the rest of the dreadful night, you are to comfort yourself as best as you can. It is a thoroughly impersonal system (not in every way, of course), that works mercilessly, reducing human beings to animals kept behind bolted bars. How could a man lying sick in bed run away! But sick or well, the animal must be locked up for the night. There is nothing more to be said or done about it.

I am really hungry to live like a human being again. But this last lap seems to get longer every day. I hope I shall be able to do regular reading and writing soon. Then time will become less ruthlessly real. The trouble, however, is that this damnable existence has grown so irksome that my thought seems to lose freshness. Lately, I have been rejecting in disgust what I wrote for several days. It sounds so stale. My ambition is to take the dreaded dryness out of scientific stuff, and present it as a pleasant reading. On the whole, I have succeeded. But now I am fagged out, and feel that I must live a human life and breathe in a less suffocating atmosphere, for my thoughts to get fresh and lively again.

Nevertheless, I am not letting myself go. Shall take care of myself as best as possible. Because, I want to come

out in a passable state of health. For example, with all the weakness, I actually cooked myself some soup to-day. It was not entirely a pastime. The man who used to cook for me was released to-day, and the new incumbent knows as much of preparing some sick diet as I know how to conduct a divine service in a synagogue. But as it happens, I can cook better. Don't think of my culinary art practised in Berlin! Here, one must be the proverbial French housewife, who is said to be able to prepare a delicious dinner of six courses out of potato peels and a few leaves of some green stuff. My soup was not bad. And that is saying a great deal when I feel nausea at the sight of the standardised food I have been eating for five years. What should I not give for a dinner in one of those Parisian Brasseries with a good bottle of Pommard!

.Enough of nonsense. But my head is so empty, though heavy like a load, full of extraneous substance which is still reluctant to leave the new-found home. I think I shall write only one more letter from this place. Don't get optimistic and excited with false hopes. I shall not be released any earlier than November 20. With me, Justice (I must dignify the fickle deity with a capital) is unusually stern, to the extent of attaining the ideal of proverbial blindness. By the way, how did the good Greek Goddess (all Greek Goddesses were good, because they were so beautiful) see that the scale did not tip one or the other way? She was blind-folded. The Greek mythologist was a clever chap. He did a true picture of justice—it is on the side of those whoever have the power of pulling it down their way. The Goddess, being blind, cannot see. However, justice demands, though fairness may not, that I shall not be released before November 20. That being the case, I shall not write the November letter from prison. Written on my

release, it will reach you several days earlier, and that will be the first *private* letter, after five years and a half.

The illness interrupted a rather interesting bit of work I was doing—out of my plan. A new Francis Bacon has appeared in India. The Chief Justice of the High Court of this province (an Indian) has reverted, as a pastime, I presume, to his old love of mathematics he studied at Cambridge. He has come out with a "New Gravitational Theory", which would not only scrap the entire structure of the Theory of Relativity, but throw Wave Mechanics into the bargain. I have naturally been following the exposition of his theory with great interest, having had studied during these last years all that could be said against the Relativity Theory. As regards the new Quantum Theory, I consider it to be the most prodigious child of modern science. However, I was eager to know what new objections could be made against Einstein's system which is so obviously a logically rounded up structure. I could not get the full text of Sir Shah Mohammad Suleiman's (that's the name of our Bacon) paper; but gradually managed to gather quite a clear idea of the physical content and philosophical implication of his theory. He has declared that Einstein's denial of Absolute Time and the Schroedinger-Heisenberg denial of the reality of matter are the "greatest heresies of modern science", and therefore should be combated. It is obvious that, as regards the last, he is simply wrong. That I have shown decisively in the three chapters on "Substance" in my book. And as regards the former, the suggestion is that physics should return to Newtonian absolutism—certainly a preposterous suggestion to be made after a quarter of a century's development of physics with the guiding principle of Relativity. However, I am curious to know if this new theory

is known in the scientific world of Europe and how it is being received.

Max Born was in this country recently. But as far as I know, he did not express any opinion about Suleiman's theory; nor has any of the leading Indian scientists. I am, of course, particularly desirous of having Einstein's opinion. Has he seen the paper? According to the established academic procedure, it should have been submitted to him. But he has never made any public reference to it. As regards Wave Mechanics, Suleiman is obviously misinformed. I have made that quite clear. So, his opinion on that score is irrelevant. But he is reported to have made out a strong mathematical case for his new Theory of Gravitation: only, there is little new in it, in so far as we are concerned, not with a mere name of a physical phenomenon, nor with an elegant mathematical formula, but with the nature of the phenomenon itself. The best that can be said for the new theory is that it claims to have found new mathematical justification for reviving Newtonian concepts. The fallacy, however, is that Einstein's theory is not a rejection of the classical theory; it is the logical consequence of the entire development of physics in the nineteenth century. Einstein simply defines the elementary undefinables of Newton.

I have decided to submit a provisional critique of the new theory, pointing out particularly its factual errors and philosophical incongruities. How can you defend the physical reality of matter against the attack of the Eddington School, if you revive the metaphysical absolutist notion of categories? I should naturally want to know Einstein's opinion. As I propose to push on my critique of the new theory, I shall have to write more fully about it later on.

That is enough for to-day. Even this much is written

in three attempts. I shall finish the letter to-morrow. It is still quite early in the evening. I shall take my cup of milk and bread, and retire. Being tired out by so many efforts—cooking, eating, letter-writing—I hope to have a good night's sleep, which will peg up my pins, so that I shall perform my culinary adventure more successfully to-morrow. I intend to make a custard pudding! What do you think of that? Am I not a talent? But you are not impressed by mere talent. Unfortunately, genius does not grow in every bush, even when it is about cooking! I am, however, sure that it will not be such a rarity when our great-grand-children will populate the earth. But will it last that long? that is the question. Your part of the world seems to be having some nasty jolts, while feverishly preparing for greater ones. I wonder if God still looks at his handiwork and says with satisfaction: "It is good."

What happened to the new novels you were going to send? I am particularly eager to read the new Van Dine. However, it is too late to send any now. In a few days, I shall be able to return to the subject of my present study. It is the literature on psycho-analysis, including the preparatory works of Charcot, Janet and others on neurology. While studying up any particular subject, I usually write something outside the plan by way of systematising chosen materials and arranging them in my mind. While studying neurology, psycho-pathology and psycho-analysis, I have done one of those extra bits of experimental writing. It is rather interesting—called "Psychology of the Seer," dealing with mystic or religious experience. My thesis is that it is sublimation, conscious or unconscious, of suppressed impulses, mostly sexual, in the wider sense of the term; I mean, of the normal emotional life. You would be interested to know that I find myself in the orthodox Freudian

camp, though not fully agreeing with Pansexualism, which is much too overdone. But Freud's theory is more scientific—in accord with experimental psychology, which after all is the only reliable method of understanding the operation of mind. This means, I am more inclined towards Behaviourism—the kind founded upon Pavlov's researches, and animal psychology. But Freud's fundamental merit is the soundness of his philosophical position. That has drawn me to his side. The opposing Zurich School (Jung, Madder, etc.) is much too speculative, and is largely a throw-back to the classical analytical psychology. Take certain things for granted, and then spin theories about them. Jung's classification of psychological types is utterly arbitrary—with little scientific foundation.

How are all the friends? I believe they will be all very excited about the events which are moving so very fast. It would be really interesting and useful to be in Europe these days. I wonder how soon I shall be able to go. I am rather confident about the final outcome of what is called the Spanish embroglio. But, of course, there always remains the danger of one of these international gunmen touching off the powder magazine on the pretext of the events in Spain. It is astounding how these chaps manage to scare the wits out of the democratic statesmen, and get away swaggeringly with the loot. This Blumian non-intervention in the Spanish affair is such an ineffective, though well meant, effort to head off the nefarious plan of finding some plausible pretext. It would be a wise policy, if it was enforced by all those professing it. But it is not. I read of some hitch between Blum and Thorez. I am always a bit uneasy about this bouncing boy. Any weakening of the Front Populaire at this juncture would be catastrophic. The Spanish disease, nurtured from Italy

and Germany, may then affect France. Will that create any better situation? I think not. Yet, on the other hand, Blum's back must be stiffened up. I read an astonishing bit of news about Jacques' new tendency. He is reported to be in the run for replacing De la Roque. It is incredible! Yet, who can say? That would mean a personal blow for me. But one must be a superman not to be bitter at the treatment accorded to him. Even if he does go to the dogs, I shall always like him personally, and understand his feelings. That would, of course, not mean condoning his behaviour in the least.

There, that is a rather long letter for a sick man to write. But I have done it in three instalments. It is so unsatisfactory to send a few lines about personal woes and other trivialities at the end of a long long month.

District Jail, Dehra Dun,

October 21, 1936.

THIS is the last letter from the tomb. At last, it has become a matter of days; even months are gone. Today next month. I shall have had already two days of relative freedom. Counting backwards, today I complete five years and three months of this life.

To tell the truth, I am tired of this world. It appears to be doomed to destruction, or a possible rebirth after a protracted period of torture and torment, interspersed with feats of great heroism. Has it occurred to you that this is an age of heroism? That is the only saving grace for this accursed epoch. When we think of that, our own little woes appear so very insignificant. That should give us the courage to bear up. But it is not a question of courage or lack of it. What is the most effective manner to act under the given situation; how can one make life bear the

greatest amount of fruit in these days of wasted energy and tragic efforts? That is the question. If we are in for a new period of "Decline and Fall" of the old world before the rise of the new, then, monasticism (a modern form of it) becomes a historical necessity—to keep the fire of science and culture burning. But really it won't be so bad as all that, though a more or less long period of decline, marked by violent self-destruction, appears to be inevitable. It sounds like H. G. Wells. Did you see the new film of his, "Picture of the Future"?

Well, I am afraid these are damned defeatist ideas, not to be expressed too freely. But this is our long-distance fire-side talk—without reserve, and not being proud residents of the Third Reich, we need not be afraid of having dictaphones planted at home!

We are all but out of the woods. Don't be depressed by the thought of the difficulties that are still to be overcome. You can depend more on a man out of prison, and I shall be out in another twenty-eight days. The world is cruel, but we are resolute.

I am forgetting that this still is a letter from jail, and am tempted to write things which must wait another four weeks. Meanwhile, this much: Give my warmest greetings to all the friends, and tell them that nothing would please me more than to be with them, if I could. I am terribly worried. How could the Blumians be such confounded fools! Don't they see that the noose is relentlessly closing on their own accursed necks, with the aid and connivance of the "democratic" powers, for the pleasure of whom they are selling their souls, and themselves assisting the rape of democracy? The French Republic is doomed, unless some miracle happens. What could possibly save her, when the African hordes of Franco would be on

the Pyreness to close up the ring? The precious democratic allies would let her be ravaged by her own army, already permeated with catholic-nationalist sentiments. That is the tragic result of the policy of know-towing before those who found in non-intervention the most effective manner of helping the victory of Fascism in Spain. Swarms of bombing planes of the latest type do not grow on the barren mountains of Morocco. Nor do heavy guns and an endless supply of munitions. Whence did they all come to Spain, and particularly for the benefit of one party? Unless we believe that the cause of religion is being supernaturally aided—that Mother Church has recovered her power of doing miracles—we cannot avoid the obvious conclusion. No reasonable man can. Only hypocrisy and dishonesty can confuse the obvious truth of the situation; and still they talk of non-intervention! If Franco gets Azana (he won't get Caballero, who'd rather die fighting), it will be a question of time for Blum to be hanged by De la Roque or some of the Marshals of the Republic. That would be a grim irony of fate. The only possible escape—to join the holy crusade—is closed to a son of Israel.

Doriot is a tragedy. Isn't he? The last batch of magazines brought some details about his activities. With his popularity, he can become a real danger. But who is to blame—originally? Even now I believe that he was driven to act desperately. He is hardly an emotional muddle-head like many others. Much, too much provocation was necessary to drive him to the enemy's camp. All this, however, does not mean that I justify his action, or plead before history for a judgment less severe than he deserves.

May be I am inclined to take an excessively gloomy view of things because of being at such a great distance, and practically out of touch for such a long time. That may be true. On the other hand, for the very same reason, my views are likely to be more realistic. Optimism is usually rationalised romanticism. Therefore, realists often

come in for the charge of pessimism. I am a confirmed pessimist; don't believe in the comforting, self-deceiving, doctrine of historical inevitability. There is nothing inevitable in history. There is no reason to believe that the possibility of the present civilisation breaking down, and being wiped out under its own burdens, is totally excluded. The alternative of decline, decay, demoralisation and decomposition, is of course always there. The forces making for a reconstruction are incomparably stronger to-day than in the equally critical periods of the past. But there is no absolute guarantee that they will triumph. Confidence contains a large element of hope. Let us hope. Meanwhile, the plot thickens.

The Americans are always fussy about the passport business. They are so afraid that barbarians should invade their precious country. There are hundreds of Americans who live abroad for years and years, and yet retain their citizenship. The rule is not so rigidly applied generally. Some pompous petty consular official must be making the trouble in your case. Then, those "white Caucasians" with a mixture of all sorts of blood flowing in their veins, do not take kindly to women marrying "Non-Aryans". You tell them that you do not want to defile their "God's own country", that you will abandon American citizenship, as soon as you will reach your adopted country. They cannot insist upon a married woman to leave her husband and go to Washington from time to time to pay taxes. Why don't these modern Solomons make their laws more sensible? To grant a right, and at the same time make it impossible of practical use!

At last, this letter is done. I wrote it in four instalments. The next one will be written from outside. Just think of that!

Today is our greatest national festival—of pagan origin. It is celebrated particularly in my native province Bengal. There it lasts for ten days. In these parts, only two. The

mythology also varies. In these parts, it is believed to be the day of Rama's victory over Ravana—the story of the epic "Ramayana". In our province, the celebration is of the defeat of the demons (Titans of Hindu mythology) who had conquered the Gods and driven them out of the Olympus. The feat was performed by the incarnation of Cosmic Energy—as a Goddess with ten arms. That Goddess is worshipped. Beautiful images of earth are build by village craftsmen doing the job hereditarily. After six days of preparation and three days of worship (flocks of goats and sheep, sometimes even buffaloes, are sacrificid; that is the only occasion when we could eat meat as children), the images are drowned in water—today. In the evening, the entire people get drunk with a preparation from the dried leaves of *Canabis Indica*, accompanied with sweets which accentuate the intoxicating effect. While young, we enjoyed the festival immensely. We all got new clothes. I expected to go home for it this year. But no luck! At home, we are the priestly possessors of an old temple with a Goddess with eight arms—and free-hold land. Naturally, in the olden days, the celebration used to be great—and gory—at the cost of poor goats and peasants.

Cheer up! We shall see, do and enjoy no ends of things before long. I am losing my caution and patience. The prize is too great to be trifled with.

*Dehra Dun, (Not Jail.)
November 20, 3 p. m. 1936.*

I AM out after five years and four months. The event happened at eight thirty this morning. So, I feel like having been out for ages. I am rather bewildered. Have been with people all this time. What a contrary experience. They are all so kind and affectionate. This little town is all astir to have in its midst someone who has been for years a mere name. Now he is here in flesh. You can imagine their excitement. But I want rest. So, all public

demonstration has been prohibited. I am sitting at the place of my friend, the local advocate. He, together with a few other prominent local leaders, came to meet me at the gate. I shall stay here a day or two' although the people want to keep me longer. I expect to meet Nehru tomorrow at a place you already know—Bareilly. He is always travelling for the election campaign. I am going to stay with him at Allahabad for some time—until the plan of movement and place of residence is fixed. I shall write in more detail from there by the next mail. Now we don't have to wait for the next month!

I am already feeling confident. You will be glad to know that a number of close friends came here to receive me from distant parts. None of them is well off, and it takes a lot of money to travel the long distances in this country. So, you see, they must be rather fond of me. I find the atmosphere welcome, and feel confident that I shall be able to do effective work. No, I do not want to go to jail again, not if I can help. I am not going to squander the relative freedom, for which I have paid so very dearly.

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